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NARRATIVE

OF

RIOTS AT ALTON:

IN CONNECTION WITH THE

DEATH OF REV. ELIJAH P. LOVEJOY.

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BY REV. EDWARD BEECHER,

PRESIDENT OF ILLINOIS COLLEGE.

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ALTON:  
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## ADVERTISEMENT.

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Three months ago, a manuscript copy of the following narrative was prepared for publication, mailed at Jacksonville, Illinois, and directed to New-York, to be there printed. It never arrived at the place of its destination, and must either have been lost or otherwise disposed of. This explains the delay in the publication of the Narrative.

The publisher is aware that it would have been received with more avidity, if it had been issued immediately after the transaction to which it refers; but he feels confident, that the plan of the work, and the train of thought pursued by its author, will sustain its claim, independently of the interest growing out of merely transient or

local excitements, to the serious attention of an intelligent public. Facts are herein detailed, which have not been hitherto developed; and the general views taken of the anti-slavery discussion, and its general bearings on the moral interests of the world, are striking, and in many respects original.

THE PUBLISHER.

ERRATA.

Page 32, 14th line from the bottom, for, "*I could yesterday*," read, "*If I could*."

Page 33, 3d line from the top, for, "*the nature and*," read, "*nature and the*."

Page 39, 3d line from the bottom, for, "*will still trust*," read, "*will still treat*."

Page 41 10th line from the bottom, for, "*national*," read, "*rational*."

Page 43, 15th line from the bottom, for, "*all its members*," read, "*any of its members*."

Page 49, 2d line from the top, for, "*then*," read, "*there*."

Page 60, 12th line from the top, for, "*sound*," read, "*sacred*."

# ALTON RIOTS.

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## CHAPTER I.

It often happens that events, in themselves of no great importance, are invested with unusual interest in consequence of their connection with principles of universal application, or with momentous results. Of this kind are the events which preceded and led to the death of the Rev. Elijah P. Lovejoy : the first martyr in America to the great principles of the freedom of speech and of the press.

Of these events I propose in the following pages to give an account. The facts are of a nature sufficiently astounding in any age, or at any time. The destruction of four printing presses in succession; the personal abuse of the editor, from time to time by repeated mobs; and his final and premeditated murder !

Still more astounding are they when we consider the country in which they occurred. Had it been in revolutionary France; or in England, agitated by the consequent convulsion of the nations; there had been less cause for surprise. But it was not. It was in America—the land of free discussion and equal rights.

Still more are we amazed when we consider the subjects, the discussion of which was thus forcibly arrested. Had it been an effort to debauch and pollute the public mind by obscenity and atheism; or by injurious and disorganising schemes; the rise of public indignation had at least found a cause; though the friends of truth and righteousness are not the men who employ mobs as their chosen instruments of persuasion. But it was none of these. It was solely the advocacy of the principles of freedom and equal rights.

Were these principles of recent origin, and the opinions of a sect, it might have caused less surprise. But they are the sacred legacy of ages :—the doctrines of our nation's birth; of natural justice; and of God.

All these things are astonishing : but there is one fact that may justly excite amazement still more deep and overwhelming ; the opinions and feelings elicited by events like these. Had an earthquake of indignation convulsed the land; had the united voices of every individual of every party rebuked and remedied the wrong; all had been well. But during the progress of the scenes there have been found those in reputation as wise and good, who have been unsparing in their censure on the sufferers; and stimulated the evil doers by sympathy or feeble rebuke. And after the final and dreadful catastrophe, only a faint tribute has been given *by them* to certain abstract principles of free inquiry as generally good; and a decent regret for their violation has been expressed.—But the full tide of indigna-

tion has been reserved for the audacious man, who dared to speak and act as a freeman ; and though lawlessly inflicted, his penalty has been declared to be deserved.

What are we to say of facts like these ? They at least open a deep chapter in human nature, and in the condition of our country. They are the result of principles neither superficial nor accidental. They penetrate to the very vitals of society ; and indicate a crisis in our national life.

That as a nation we are radically unsound and lost, they do not to my mind indicate. But that there are in the body politic causes of tremendous power, tending to that result, they do evince. And the question on which all turns, is now before us as a nation ; and on its decision, our life or death depends. Have we coolness of thought left sufficient to discern them, and energy of moral feeling enough to react ?

As these events are of a nature to rouse and demand public attention, I hope that an impartial narration of them will be candidly and thoughtfully read : and as I have been an actor in the leading events from the beginning—an eye witness of most that I describe ; I feel that no one who speaks only from hearsay, can have so full a knowledge of all the causes of these events as I ; and as perhaps no one has been more severely censured by enemies, or regarded in greater error by some sincere and valued friends ; I feel that not only a regard to truth and the general good, but decent regard to the opinions of others, requires me to speak.

It is an event which will be known extensively, and on which a judgment will be formed by the civilized world. And in the correctness of that judgment the highest interests of humanity are involved. In it, too, the welfare of this state and nation are vitally involved. In one portion of the body politic soundness is gone, the laws have given way, the tremendous reign of anarchy has begun, and our only hope for their final restoration to their wonted majesty and power is in the restorative energies of that portion of the body politic which remains yet uncorrupted.

The question may be considered in two lights :

1. As one of civil rights.
2. As one of moral rights.

The first relates to what the laws of the land allow each citizen to do ; and in doing which they guaranty him defense. The other relates to those duties the performance of which no human laws can enforce ; but which arise from the obligations resting on every man to use his civil rights wisely and benevolently, from a regard to God and the general good. So far as a claim to civil defense is concerned, nothing is essential except that a man violate no civil right : and in deciding whether it is a duty to give such defense no community has a right to agitate any other question.

If a man's civil rights are safe only so long as he uses them wisely and prudently, we ought so to be informed in our constitutions : and, still more, we

ought to have a civil standard of wisdom and prudence, enacted by law ; and courts and judges to try men for imprudence and indiscretion. For if men are to maintain their rights only on such grounds, and there is to be no standard but the opinions of a mob, may God in his mercy evermore deliver me and my children from such rights and such freedom.

There is no tyranny on earth so execrable as the tyranny of a mob. But indeed the whole idea is ridiculous in the extreme—that the question of wisdom or prudence is to be raised at all, before a prompt defense of rights. It is foreign to the whole genius of our nation. As long as a citizen violates no law, and stands solely on the ground of civil rights, he is to be defended to the uttermost. Nor does crime vacate rights. Even the vilest criminal has a right to a fair and impartial trial ; and if condemned, it must be only by law.

It was because I wished to judge of the soundness of the nation on this point, that I have as yet made no effort to correct the false views so industriously circulated by those who wish to palliate the atrocity of these deeds. These all tend solely to one point : that Mr. Lovejoy and his friends were not wise and prudent ; and that on them the whole responsibility rests. And I was anxious to see if the manly sense of the nation was still so unclouded as to detect the base subterfuge ; and their moral sense sufficiently sound to abhor it. To a very cheering extent I have not been disappointed on this point. The majority of the nation still

seems to be sound; and with manly indignation has repelled the loathsome and guilty excuse. Still this is not true of all.

There are still those who, if their principles were to prevail, and their feelings infect the nation, would soon plunge us in an ocean of anarchy and blood. And as a citizen of the free states I blush that they have furnished the greatest share of such. Alas, that freemen will sell their principles for popular favor, or for gold. But it is time, now, that the events of Alton, should be tried by another standard; that, on the part of the friends of good order there may be no needless concessions or reserve; and that the last pretexts of enemies may be taken away.

By the standard of wisdom, benevolence and prudence, then, let these events be tried; and I care not how high that standard may be. Not that I arrogate to Mr. Lovejoy, or to his friends, entire exception from error in scenes so trying. But I do mean that a correct standard of judgment on those points is one of the last things which they have to fear. Indeed, had not the standard of the community been unusually low, such events could not have transpired: and it was following a better standard that excited their wrath. On many minds, I know that the impression is deep and strong that we were urged on by a blind impulse, next to infatuation, heated by excitement, and without deliberate thought. Indeed to many, any action on the subject of slavery that is designed to remove it, is synonymous with infatuation and insanity. Let all

such know, that every step taken was the result of long and patient thought ; and of principles fixed in our coolest hours.

To evince that such was the fact ; and to enable the public to know what our principles are, and to judge of our actions by them ; I propose to consider what are the principles of wisdom, prudence and benevolence in such a case :—to narrate the events as they transpired :—and to try our actions, and those of our opposers, by this test.

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## CHAPTER II.

What then are the true principles in this case ? As this is a practical question, involving great and all pervading consequences, it is of great moment that our principles of judgment be sound ; as an error here must vitiate all our results. Happily for us, we have an unerring standard near at hand ; and with this let us begin. “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and to depart from evil that is understanding.” From this we infer

1. That we are first of all to use all possible means to ascertain the purposes of God ; as regards the age and nation in which we live ; and so lay our plans that they may coincide with his designs : “For there is no counsel or knowledge or device against the Lord. His counsel will stand and he

will do all his pleasure." And if we "regard not the works of the Lord, nor the operation of his hands, he will destroy us and not build us up."

2. Never hope finally to avert a discussion of the great fundamental principles of human society, which is called for by the course of God's providence and the movements of the age.

3. Let the movements of God's providence decide as to the time of the discussion. That is, Do not seek prematurely to accelerate it ; and do not try to avert it when great events urge it upon us.

4. Employ the time allowed by Providence in studying the subject, and the structure of human society ; thus preparing wisely to meet the discussion when it comes.

5. Let no errors or imprudencies, real or supposed, of the advocates of truth, indispose the mind to receive it on its own evidence : and let no amount of popular prejudice, and no fear of personal sacrifice deter us from following out our own convictions of duty, in the fear of God.

The soundness of the principles thus stated none can deny. Nor can it be denied that, in a world opposed to God these ought at all times, and popular opinion never, to be our standard of wisdom in the formation of our plans. As it regards their execution we are bound to regard the laws of holiness and of the human mind. Hence,

6. Let all discussions of truth be conducted under a vivid sense of the presence of God : and so conducted as to time, manner and proportion, that they may tend to diffuse a spirit of holiness throughout

the community ; and decidedly and boldly to rebuke every form of sin.

7. Avoid giving needless occasions of irritation, excitement, and lawless violence.

8. Aim to diffuse kind feelings throughout the community ; and especially to strengthen the bonds of union among good men.

9. If, however, after all your efforts to promote holiness and union, any portion of community will cleave to error and sin, you are bound not to renounce truth, duty and God, to prevent division however painful, or evil feelings however great, or deeds of violence however atrocious. On them rests the responsibility who forsake God and the truth, and not on you. For this reason were Jesus and his disciples guiltless, though divisions and death followed in their train. Indéed, in a corrupt state of society, eminent holiness and nearness to God are so far from rendering divisions and excitements improbable, that unless the community itself will reform, they render them certain.

In deciding, therefore, on the wisdom of any course of conduct, we are to view it in all its relations ; and not test it by a few hackneyed topics of popular prudence. A community deeply involved in the commission of evil loves neither disturbance, repentance, nor rebuke. Their language is, Let us alone. And any exhibition of the truth, however well meant, which reaches the conscience will cause bitterness and reaction. The truth on this point has been so admirably and pointedly expressed by the departed Evarts, that I cannot for-

bear to quote his words. In the *Panoplist*, vol. 16, p. 245, after a candid examination of the laws of Virginia, prohibiting the instruction of the blacks, he thus concludes :

“It is impossible for an enlightened conscience to doubt that the slaveholders of Virginia, taken as a body, are ‘fighting against God.’ There are, we trust, numerous exceptions to this daring hostility. It cannot be doubted, however, what will be the issue of the contest. The many millions of the blacks hereafter to live on our continent will not be always debarred from reading the bible, nor will Africans be always forbidden to preach the gospel.”

Noble rebuke! and yet uttered in the spirit of love and godly fear. And what was the result? On p. 488, we find that it had caused a great ferment at the south, and brought on him severe censure. Hear him now in reply.

“With respect to the ferment which the article in our June number produced, we can only say, that to excite passion or provoke opposition was far from our object. But our southern friends must be aware that the simple fact of the existence of irritation is by no means conclusive evidence that there is just occasion for it. We could easily illustrate this position by a reference to scriptural history. It is indeed an indisputable truth, that no great abuse can be removed without producing a great deal of irritation. Look at the monstrous abuses practised by the Romish church; and at the exposure of them in England, Germany, and Scotland. These abuses were acknowledged by the advocates of that

church, and it was only contended that they should be attacked mildly and gently, that they might be gradually and silently corrected. But if the reformers had yielded to these representations ; if Luther had written against popery in such a manner as not to offend the most bigoted and interested of the popish clergy, what would have become of the reformation ?

“The southern people are now unanimous in condemning the slave trade ; but when this trade was first attacked, the intrepid assailants were vilified as a set of miserable drivellers, who under the cant of religion and humanity, were willing to put daggers into the hands of all the negroes in the West Indies : who, instead of benefiting the blacks either in Africa or the islands, would injure them all : who would in fact produce by their measures, if Parliament should adopt them, nothing but revolt, insurrection, burning and massacre in all the colonies. Never was there more irritation on any subject, than prevailed in respect to the abolition of the slave trade among all slave holders in the British empire.”

That there has been a great ferment and much irritation in consequence of the discussion of slavery in this state ; and that it has resulted in outrages of unparalleled atrocity, no one needs to be informed. But it by no means follows that it was through the negligence or indiscretion of the friends of the truth ; or that all possible efforts were not made which a sense of duty would allow, to conciliate

opponents and prevent such results. Let the facts of the case then be calmly considered, and tested by the principles already laid down.

And that the scope and reasons of my remarks may be the more clearly appreciated, I would observe that I shall construct my narration with reference to a great variety of charges against the members of the convention at Alton as a body, and myself and Mr. Lovejoy in particular. The fact that I have been publicly, severely; and pointedly attacked; accused of jesuitism, fanatical zeal, dereliction of official duty, and treasonable designs, must be my apology for any reference to myself which a vindication of my course shall render it necessary to make. I shall make no reference to individual assailants; and still entertain the kindest feelings for all by whom I have been thus charged; and hope that they will at length see and candidly acknowledge their error.

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### CHAPTER III.

The first point that merits our attention is, the origin of the discussion on the subject of slavery in this state. This is not to be ascribed to any individual effort, but to the gradual movements of the providence of God in the present age. The causes which have conspired to make this a topic of intense interest to the christian world are, the aboli-

tion of the slave trade throughout the civilized world ; and of slavery in Hayti, the West Indies ; South America, Mexico, and elsewhere, and the discussions connected with these events ; the free principles of our own constitutions ; their influence on the world ; and the reaction of that influence on us. These causes gave rise to an animated discussion of the subject in the eastern free states, and to a great reaction and excitement at the south ; and thus attention was aroused to the subject throughout the Union. In this state there was an original leaven of anti-slavery principles in its earliest settlement, and preceding the discussions at the east : and the influence of this added to that of papers from the east, awakened an extensive interest in the subject over the whole state. The result of these causes a wise man could easily foresee, but not avert. The great current of human destiny bore this subject onward as one of the great practical questions of the age. On it the intellect of the civilized world was aroused ; and to it the Spirit of God gave a resistless course. To suppress discussion was impossible. As well might you forbid the day-spring from on high to know his place, or the splendors of the approaching sun to dissipate the shades of night. To prevent discussion I made no effort, satisfied that it would be vain ; and that, if possible, it was not to be desired. On this subject as a nation we must act or suffer. If in season we learn and do our duty, we shall escape the judgments of God. If not, the hour of retribution is hastening on.

Free social discussion, and an expression of opinion in ecclesiastical bodies, were for a time deemed sufficient. But the tide of feeling continued so to rise, that some more effectual mode of influencing the public mind was demanded. The establishment of the St. Louis Observer, under the editorial care of Mr. Lovejoy, in part met this demand. I say, in part, for though he manifested decided opposition to slavery, yet his views were considered erroneous on the subject of immediate emancipation. It here deserves notice that, although decidedly opposed to the peculiar views of the abolitionists, yet he was driven from St. Louis by a mob, because he insisted on the duty of making efforts gradually to abolish the system of slavery. It was strenuously insisted on, that he should let the subject entirely alone. He then removed his paper to Alton. His press on landing was left on the wharf, it being Sunday, and was afterwards destroyed by a few individuals. This outrage was strongly reprobated in a subsequent meeting of citizens; and resolutions passed to sustain the laws, ferret out the offenders, and reimburse his loss.

When the paper was re-established in this state, it was not his design to give so much room to the subject of slavery as he had in Missouri; and he so stated in the meeting. At the same time he expressly refused to give any pledge on the subject, but openly stated that he reserved to himself the right to publish whatever he might choose, on any change of views. Such a change gradually took place, the causes of which were those as stated to

me by himself:—A careful investigation of the subject from a deep sense of his own responsibility; a discovery of the atrocious misrepresentations of the views of the abolitionists which were universally and diligently circulated, and to which he had once given credence; a clear conviction of the unworthy and sordid motives of the most violent opposers; a discovery that the party of moderate men had no plan for doing any thing, and that they did nothing but hinder all who desired to act; and a distinct perception of its fatal influence on the church, especially as illustrated in the proceedings of recent General Assemblies. This change in his own feelings led him to feel the importance of giving more prominence to the subject in his paper, and at the same time the demand for a thorough discussion of it became more urgent among a large portion of his subscribers.

It has sometimes been said, but very gratuitously, that he was the means of getting up the excitement in this state. The truth is, if he had opposed it with all his power he could not have stopped the movement; but it would have swept him and his paper away. Of his change of views he deemed it his duty to make a statement to Mr. W. S. Gilman, who had with his partner, given him efficient assistance in re-establishing his paper after the press had been destroyed. He felt under no obligation, he informed me, to the citizens at large, because they had not fulfilled the pledge which they had given him of reimbursing him for the loss of his property, and had given him no aid in re-establishing his

paper; and because he had publicly refused to come under any pledge to them. He was advised by Mr. Gilman to follow the dictates of his own judgment, which he accordingly did.

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#### CHAPTER IV.

WE now approach a point of great importance in its relations to the final result;—the proposal to call a convention to form a state Antislavery Society. Of this measure, too, Mr. Lovejoy is regarded as the author and prime mover: and he is supposed to have urged it on without consideration and without judgment. The truth is, it was urged on his attention by others, in different parts of the state; and was by him from time to time delayed. At last, on being again requested to bring up the subject, he concluded to mention it in his paper, and ask for an expression of public sentiment. The response was decided; and it became clear that there was a general and strong desire that a convention should be held. This state of feeling is in part to be ascribed to the natural progress of interest and thought; in part to the impression produced on many by the violent proceedings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in 1837, and the belief that such unjust measures had been introduced into the church to defend slavery; and in part to the agitation of the Texas question. The pro-

posal of such a convention at once aroused the hostility of the enemies of his sentiments, and laid a foundation for all the disastrous results which have followed. A meeting of citizens was soon called at the market-house, in which resolutions were passed charging on Mr. Lovejoy the violation of a pledge, and censuring him for his course. A committee was also appointed to wait on him, with an implied assumption, that the meeting claimed the power to regulate his course as editor. This claim he felt it his duty to deny and resist; while at the same time, to remove all reasonable grounds of objection, he published a clear, candid, and unanswerable statement of his views. To expose the unsoundness of his principles no attempt was made; and that, for the best of all possible reasons—a despair of success. A most disgraceful and incendiary paragraph also appeared in a paper in St. Louis, urging the inhabitants of Alton to eject Mr. Lovejoy from among them as a fomenter of divisions and an enemy to the public good. Having failed to intimidate, and having no resource in argument, they began to mature their plans for the application of force.

At this time I received a letter from Mr. Lovejoy, urging on me the importance of giving a prayerful attention to the subject; and of aiding to give a right direction to public feeling in this state; and requesting me, if consistent with my sense of duty, to give my name to the call for a convention. I had up to this time not participated at all in the public discussion which was so deeply exciting the nation,

but had been merely an attentive and thoughtful spectator. Such was the magnitude of the subject, and such the consequences involved in its proper management, that, until the providence of God should make it my duty I was glad to retire from the conflict, and spend my time in preparing for the hour, should it ever arrive, in which duty would allow me to be silent no longer. My views, when I came to this state, were decidedly hostile to the doctrines of immediate emancipation; and it was not until the year 1835 that I became satisfied, from a careful examination of the history of experiments on this subject, that the doctrine of gradual emancipation was fallacious, and that of immediate emancipation was philosophical and safe. From that time I felt it to be a matter of immense importance that measures should be taken, kindly but thoroughly, to convince the slave states of the fact, and to urge the claims of duty. Still, however, considering the magnitude and importance of the subject; and the interest, ignorance and prejudice to be encountered, I felt that more was to be hoped from deep and thorough discussions in a cool and dispassionate style, than from popular appeals and excitement. At the same time I was dissatisfied with the spirit of much which had been written on the subject; and with the disposition so common, of pushing true principles to an extreme. On the whole I decidedly preferred to stand on my own ground—to join no society—and to speak as an individual, if I spoke at all. In reply to Mr. Lovejoy, I stated these facts; and added that I would join no society, un-

less they would assume such grounds as I could approve. In reply, he requested a full statement of all my views, which I freely gave him.

Meanwhile the plans of the friends of mob-law had been matured, the office of the Observer assailed, and the press destroyed. It was known beforehand that such an attack was contemplated ; and a decided public sentiment in favor of maintaining the law at all hazards might easily have prevented it : for the perpetrators were then timid ; habit and success had not given them confidence. No such public sentiment, however, existed ; and many felt—even of those deemed wise and good—that though the prostration of the law was a great evil, the publication of the Observer was one still greater : to such a degree had prejudice and a false view of their own local interests blinded their minds. They seemed to regard it as a less evil to have their city become the abode of mob law than the theatre of a fair discussion of an unpopular theme. Preparations had also been made to defend the office by arms ; but as there was a hesitation in regard to the propriety of using arms in such a case, when the office was assailed not a gun was fired ; but it was abandoned to its fate.

Decided efforts were immediately made by the friends of Mr. Lovejoy to replace the press, and to enlist the friends of religion and good order in an effort to maintain the ground. But, to such a degree were the churches paralyzed, the effort was unavailing. A press however was procured by the friends of the paper at Alton and Quincy, and

a consultation was held in Alton to decide what should be done. It was at this time that Mr. Lovejoy sent in a communication offering to resign his place as editor, if in their judgment the interests of the paper and the public good could be promoted thereby. His offer, however, was not accepted, and the whole subject was deferred for future discussion and decision.

Shortly after this Mr. Lovejoy visited Jacksonville to attend the commencement of Illinois College ; and spent a considerable portion of his time in my family. As a number of clergymen and laymen from different parts of the state were assembled, it was deemed expedient to consult on the measures best adapted to the present crisis. An unanimous opinion was expressed that, in order to maintain the principles of free discussion, it was of great importance that the paper should be again established at Alton, under Mr. Lovejoy as its editor. I suggested to Mr. Lovejoy the expediency of so far changing the character of the convention, that the friends of free discussion who were not in favor of forming an anti-slavery society could attend ; and also suggested that if a society were formed it should be called the society of inquiry on the subject of slavery. My motives were twofold. I felt that it would be calamitous to have a proposed meeting of citizens broken up for fear of violence ; and at the same time I wished to remove all real or unreal causes of irritation. I thought also, that an invitation to the friends of free inquiry to attend a perfectly uncommitted meeting, would

tend to produce an influence which should restore the supremacy of law in Alton, deliver the state from its present disgrace, and remove the influence of so pestilential an example in the commercial capital of this portion of the state. Though opposed to his own feelings, he yielded to my wishes except as it regarded the name ; and this plan was also approved by the meeting.

On these grounds, and intent solely on the effort to prevent further violence and to restore the lost character of so important a place I allowed my name to be used in calling the convention. The call was accordingly issued inviting the friends of free inquiry to meet and consult what course it was best to take on the subject of slavery, and stating, that by coming together they did not commit themselves to any course of measures. Fearing however the intrusion of the enemies of free discussion to defeat the meeting, he limited the call to such as believe the system of American slavery to be sinful, and that it ought immediately to be abandoned.

Before the issuing of the call another press had been landed and destroyed. Without deciding where to establish it, Mr. Lovejoy sent on immediately for another : though it was at this time his prevailing opinion that it was advisable to locate it elsewhere.

On seeing the call I was disappointed at finding it limited in such a manner, as it was inconsistent with my design of inducing those who were deemed judicious and moderate men, and who did not wish to be set down as partisans, from attending. I ac-

cordingly went to Alton and stated to him my views. He gave me his reason for the limitation and seemed fully convinced of its necessity. How correct was his judgment subsequent events will show. I, however, did not think that men who had already destroyed two presses would dare to claim a seat among the friends of free inquiry, and was anxious that the invitation should be enlarged. I also proposed the plan of not forming an organization at all; but of appointing committees of inquiry, and assigning to them subjects to investigate and report at a future meeting. I also urged the plan of calling the organization, if it should be formed, the society of inquiry. To all this, after consulting with his friends, he finally assented, solely for the sake of preventing division, by laying a ground of union so broad that all good men might act together. I then requested that a meeting for consultation, composed of some of the leading citizens of Alton, of various denominations might be called, to whom I stated these plans for their advice. I endeavored to lay open to them the evils of division among good men, and how such division leads to acts of popular violence. One portion of good men feeling it to be their duty to urge on an unpopular work of reformation; another portion, and that the majority, standing aloof and frowning on them as fanatical and imprudent, and thus emboldening the wicked in their deeds of violence. I stated what concessions Mr. Lovejoy and his friends were willing to make, and urged upon them the importance of countenancing the meeting by their presence, and

of inducing their friends to attend; that thus the partisans of violence might be rebuked by the united voice of the wise and the good. A vote was then passed approving these views; and expressing the opinion that the invitation should be extended to all the friends of free inquiry on the subject of slavery. I accordingly published in the Alton Telegraph a communication stating my original views in signing the call, and that I and some others of the signers, and a number of leading gentlemen in this place were desirous of having the invitation comprehend all the friends of free inquiry on the subject of slavery. I did not assume the power to control the wishes of the majority of the signers but to express my own: and did not doubt that all candid and well disposed persons would be readily admitted. I then endeavored by letters and personal influence to induce intelligent and influential men to attend and make an effort to prevent disunion and restore the majesty of violated law. I also made an effort at the meeting of the synod of Illinois to obtain a unanimous expression of opinion against the outrages at Alton, and in favor of the right of free discussion. In this I failed; a few opposing the resolutions as it seemed to me on account of the state of parties\* in the church. The reason alleged by the leading speaker was, *that it tended to unite church and state!* How simply affirming the principle that every citizen and body of men had a right to be protected by law in ex-

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\* Not Theological parties solely.

pressing their opinions, tended to unite church and state, I could not see : but as I was ashamed to have such resolutions pass by a divided vote, withdrew them, though they could have been passed by a decided majority. Still, in a meeting for consultation I advised all who could, to attend; and expressed my firm belief that no violence need be apprehended, as I had no doubt the leading citizens of Alton would countenance the meeting by their presence.

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## CHAPTER V.

With such cheering expectations I commenced my journey to Alton; little thinking how soon they were to be disappointed, and that from a quarter I had little anticipated. At Carlinville, where I spent the night, I heard from a passenger in the stage from Alton that a meeting of the Colonization Society had just been held in Upper Alton; and on inquiry as to the tenor of the speeches, found that many things had been said tending to excite prejudice and odium against the friends of immediate emancipation. I at once anticipated the result and felt sad.

On my arrival at Alton, I entered the house in which the convention was assembled and found a tumultuous speaker claiming seats for himself and friends, as the patrons of free inquiry on the subject

of slavery; and none of those citizens of Alton on whom I had mainly relied to aid in an effort to unite good men and sustain the majesty of the law, were there. I was also informed that some of the individuals thus claiming seats had already, by aiding or abetting the destruction of the press of the Observer illustrated their views of free inquiry, and signalized their valor in its defence. At all events, many of their party gave notable displays of it not long after; one of them being the reputed murderer of Mr. Lovejoy, and another having on the night of the murder presented a pistol towards Mr. W. S. Gilman and called on him to surrender the press to the mob. However, of the character of those persons I was at the time ignorant.

Mr. Lovejoy soon informed me that they were claiming seats on the ground of my notice in the Alton Telegraph, and that he had objected to their admission on the ground that they had come in to interrupt the meeting and thwart its designs, and not to maintain the cause of free inquiry. At this they were highly indignant as men of high honor, and conscious of the integrity of their purpose.

I immediately disclaimed all right to overrule the will of the majority of the signers, by my invitation; and stated that there was no regular way of organizing the convention but by first enrolling those who could respond to the original call; and that they could then admit whomsoever they pleased as the friends of free inquiry.

On this they immediately put in requisition their powers of interpretation to see if they could not

respond to the call. It became a matter of much moment to know what the immediate abolition of slavery implied. Dr. Blackburn who was in the chair, gave a statement of his views and I of mine. One of the leaders of the "friends of free inquiry," professed his full assent to these views, and so did some others. Another, however, by his critical skill, discovered that he was invited in the call, because the friends of free inquiry were invited, and the fact that the invitation was afterwards limited to those who were in favor of the immediate abolition of slavery seemed to him no impediment, though he confessed that he was not of that class. The "friends of free inquiry" being thus divided in the grounds which they should assume, it was voted to adjourn till the next day.

After the close of the meeting a leader of the "friends of free inquiry" went out and mounted the wood pile near the corner of the house and delivered an address to his followers. He inveighed bitterly against the abolitionists for denying to them the rights of free inquiry, and brought up various topics of an inflammatory kind which profligate editors had proclaimed abroad against the abolitionists. Their hearts, if they had any, were cold, and they were bound to their country by no common ties. He also commenced a tirade against the benevolent operations of the day, including the temperance society, till luckily it occurred to him that he had recently joined it himself, and had made a public address in its behalf: he then re-

tracted his charges to the no small amusement of his audience. He then charged them not to fear the abolitionists ; and to be on the spot by nine o'clock the next morning, and to bring their friends with them. Meanwhile those who had come from abroad to attend the convention concluded, in order to take away all pretext for violence, to organize on the original call, and then to open the discussion to all the friends of free inquiry, and to treat all who professed to be such as sincere.

On the next morning the chairman proceeded to organize the convention on the call by reading it, and stating that all who could respond to it would be entered as members of the convention. By this time the tumultuous friends of free inquiry had got rid of all their scruples and responded unanimously to the call, on what grounds they best can decide. If they were in favor of the immediate abolition of slavery, why make such a tumult because Mr. Lovejoy taught the doctrine ? If not, why, by responding to the call, profess that they were ? Such, however, are the facts ; and their names are on record and before the world as respondents to the call. The vote to admit all friends of free inquiry, of which we had thought, became useless. The trustees of the church, however, sent in a paper stating that we could not retain the house unless the convention was opened to free discussion to all who wished. To this we of course assented. The convention then proceeded to the election of officers. Dr. Blackburn was the candidate of the real members of the con-

vention, for president, and Dr. Hope of the "friends of free inquiry." Dr. Blackburn was elected by a considerable majority. Rev. F. W. Graves and W. Carr were chosen secretaries. A committee to report business was appointed consisting of one friend of free inquiry and two of the regular convention.

As the friend of free inquiry had publicly declared his accordance with the sentiments of the president and myself, on the subject of immediate abolition, I had good reason to expect that we might lay before the convention a declaration of sentiments to that amount. I found, however, that he was determined to report a series of resolutions of directly the opposite tenor. When one of the committee expressed his surprise at this, and reminded him that yesterday he professed that he could agree to the doctrine of immediate emancipation as publicly stated, he replied, "If I could yesterday, I can't to-day." The majority then made a report involving the same principles which were stated the day before, and the minority a counter report. The friends of free inquiry then voted to take up the minority's report as the subject of discussion, and to exclude the other. One resolution was accordingly discussed in committee of the whole, the import of which was, that, as by human laws slave-holders had a right to property in man, and as the constitution of the United States declares that no man's property shall be taken from him, without compensation, therefore the slave-holding states have no right to abolish slavery. The advocates of this resolution

were answered by Messrs. Beecher, Galt and Perkins. Their positions were shown to be contrary to nature and the immutable distinction between right and wrong, against the law of God, and the opinions and actual practice of many of the states. It soon became plain that it was easier to pass votes by a majority than to defend them by argument; and the "friends of free inquiry" became weary of their work. It was moved that the committee rise and report: which was done, and the resolution adopted. It was then moved to adopt the rest en masse. I at once inquired if it was to be without discussion. Many voices replied, "Yes, without discussion." I repeated the question with the same result. I then requested the president to put the motion in this form, "Resolved that we adopt the remaining resolutions without discussion," which he did; and in that form the "friends of free inquiry" passed it; and then voted to adjourn *sine die*. Thus passed one day: and at its close I felt a great relief.

During all these exciting scenes the real members of the convention had conducted with the utmost coolness, kindness and self-possession. Some just indignation was at first manifested at the attempts of the "friends of free inquiry" to intrude; but it soon passed away. Nor did I regret that I had made the effort; for it had proved at least one thing to a demonstration:—that neither Mr. Lovejoy nor his friends were obstinate, self-willed and uncompromising. What concessions could be required which they were not willing to make—except to

give up finally and forever all freedom of speech or inquiry, and submit to the dictation of the mob? To unite good men they had offered to give up the name of their society; to put off its organization; and to commit the whole subject to committees to report hereafter. But all would not do. Still they must be held up to odium in a meeting of good men, designated by a religious editor as uneasy and restless spirits, and given up to the tender mercies of a mob. To be associated, even for a time, with men who could act as did this gang of friends of free inquiry, would have seemed to me degrading if I had not felt that my soul disavowed all fellowship with such proceedings. What then shall we say of those men who wish to be deemed respectable, and of that professed minister of Christ, who acted with them and gave them no rebuke? What shall we say of religious editors who record their proceedings with manifest pleasure, as an expression of sentiments honorable to the citizens of Alton.

Of course the whole plan of appointing committees was dropped. Those who had assembled for high and holy purposes were united among themselves; and the rest had finished their discussion, and dispersed. Not feeling it safe to hold a public meeting on that evening, for fear of the friends of free inquiry, they assembled in private houses for prayer, and spent the evening in asking counsel of God; a part in upper Alton and a part in the city.

## CHAPTER VI.

Two important questions were now to be decided. What course to take, First, as it regards organizing a state society ; and, Second, as it regards the re-establishment of the Alton Observer.

On the first point, it was evident that all offers of compromise and co-operation were fruitless. Those who were satisfied with the plans of the Colonization Society as the only effectual means of removing slavery, would of course reject our views entirely, and pronounce all discussion of the subject of immediate emancipation useless. And the prejudices excited against us by religious men would of course have double weight in the minds of the worldly and vicious portions of the community. So that our only alternative was to organize on such principles as we were able to agree in among ourselves ; or to disperse. To take the latter step it seemed to us would be giving a complete triumph to the mob ; and be pestilent in its influence, by inviting and emboldening them to take a similar course all over the state should we ever meet again. It also seemed to us adapted to depress the spirit and diminish the courage of all the friends of freedom throughout the state. Though the plan of deferring an organization and appointing committees to report was brought up, yet it was almost unanimously rejected. And, as to the name, it seemed pretty clear by this time, that the *thing aimed at* was the

real cause of offence, and that to change the name would do no good. It was therefore deemed best to meet the next day and organize a new convention; which was accordingly done. In this it was unanimously resolved, that it is expedient at this time to organize the Illinois state Anti-Slavery Society.

It was proposed that the convention meet in the church, as before ; but threats of popular violence induced them to prefer a private house. They accordingly met in the house of Rev. T. B. Hurlbut. It having been noised abroad that these measures were contemplated, "the friends of free inquiry" came up and claimed admission. On this being refused, their leader threatened to break open the door, and to use personal violence upon Mr. Hurlbut if he came out: and this in open day. By this time, however, the police of Upper Alton were aroused ; and they took effectual measures to clear their streets of the mob: and from that time good order was preserved.

My preference still was to stand on my own ground as an individual, that I might be held responsible for no sentiments, or measures, but my own. I also knew that by joining an unpopular and despised minority, occasion would be given through me to assail and injure the institution over which I preside. As to mere personal popularity, it was a smaller matter, especially among such friends of free inquiry as I had lately seen. I felt that it was against the praise of such that our Savior had warned his followers in his emphatic

denunciation of woe on us, when all men speak well of us. Still, related as I was to a public literary institution, I felt that my conduct involved more interests than my own. One consideration, however, overruled all else. I saw a deliberate effort to render odious and crush a pious and intelligent assemblage of my fellow-citizens, who, so far as I could see, had done no wrong but to dare to think for themselves on a great moral question; and as freemen to exercise their inestimable rights, in a way expressly provided for by the constitution; that is, in a peaceful assembly for prayer and consultation. And although I had not come expecting to organize a state anti-slavery society; but to take measures to secure a kind and peaceful discussion of the subject of slavery; yet, as all these plans had been broken up; and as the Colonization Society had been introduced as the means of doing it;—(for that it was, I am informed was definitely avowed by its leading mover;) and as the purpose was avowed of establishing branches of that society throughout the state; and as I supposed they would all partake of the spirit of the present movement; I was compelled to relinquish my fondly cherished hopes of Christian union, and to decide in view of facts, as they were. And, in this view, I could not long hesitate. I felt it to be my imperative and solemn duty to associate myself with the injured and oppressed; and to exert whatever of influence I could exert, in maintaining their rights. Had I done otherwise, I should in fact, whatever my intentions had been, have been con-

sidered by the patrons of mob law, as willing to abandon the objects of their malignant hatred to their fate. I therefore felt it to be a solemn duty, situated as I was, not to retreat before the illegal violence which raged around me, but to show my abhorrence of it, at whatever hazard; and to lift up against it the voice of decided rebuke.

Still I felt that I was not at liberty to compromise any principle, or to countenance any measures which I could not approve. I therefore stated to the brethren, frankly, my views; and told them if we could agree in a declaration of sentiments, and if they would consent, at least for the present, to stand on entirely independent ground, I would unite with them in the formation of the society. At their request, I drew up a declaration of sentiments, which, after some discussion and mutual concessions, was adopted; and the society was formed.

We were unanimous in the opinion that the system of slavery is in all cases sinful; and that it is safe and a duty for the slaveholding states immediately to abolish it; and to replace it by wise and equitable laws, adapted to the condition of the emancipated; and designed to prevent among them vagrancy and idleness, and at the same time to elevate them as fast as possible, as free laborers, in the scale of intelligence and religion; and to secure to them, meanwhile, all their inalienable rights as men. We were also unanimous in the opinion, that it is in all cases a sin for an individual to hold and treat a slave as an article of property. But I wished to make an exception in favor of cases where, merely

the legal relation was retained from benevolent purposes, or from absolute necessity. But on reflection I was satisfied that the first exception ought not to be made, since retaining the legal relation from motives however good, involved the continual subjection of the slave to the whole power of the system; and in case of the insolvency or death of the master, to irreparable injustice or final ruin: and that therefore it is a duty not merely to abstain from treating a slave as property, but to put him out at once from under the power of the slave laws, by emancipation; so that his inalienable rights may be secured to him by law; and not depend upon the will of a master. I also saw that it was utterly unsafe to put the whole power of judging what was for the slave's good into the hands of an interested party; especially when the results of his judgment affected so grave a question as the retaining of a human being under a code of laws so horrid as the slave laws of our land. I also saw that the principle was liable to endless abuse, as nothing could be easier for every slaveholder in the land, than to make the slave's good the pretence for holding him in bondage, while the real motive was the love of gain. We finally agreed to make an exception only where the slaveholder had done all in his power to dissolve the legal relation, and extricate his slaves from the grasp of the system. If, after this, the laws of the community will not recognize them as free; and if the community will still treat them as under a legal relation to him which they will not dissolve, on them be the guilt. If, however, by any

efforts or sacrifices he can so change his or their circumstances as to gain the power of making them free, it is his duty to do it. In the discussion between us, it was the object of the brethren not to admit of any exception which should weaken the power of truth on the conscience; whilst it was mine, so to guard our language as not to bring a false accusation against any man, and not to blame any one for not doing impossibilities. In consequence of the discussion, my own views were changed on one point; and the brethren conceded all which I desired on the other.

I am thus particular in these details because I wish the public to know the real spirit of those men who have been so stigmatized as rash, overbearing and hot-headed. I was warned again and again, that, if I tried to co-operate with them, I should find them fierce, fiery, radical, and uncompromising. But I can truly say that I discovered none of these traits in my intercourse with the vast majority of them. They seemed desirous of union with all good men. And if my original plan for a free and christian discussion could have been carried out, if good men had not retired and left us to the mercy of a mob, the bloody scenes that followed had never transpired. And by kind and mutual comparison of views, attended with earnest prayer, we should all of us, I trust, have been guided into a knowledge of the truth; and seen eye to eye, and lifted up the voice together. And I cannot but lament that on a subject like this, an effort made in kindness and good

faith, to unite christians and arrest the progress of lawless violence, should be defeated in the manner that it was.

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## CHAPTER VII.

Towards the colonization society my feelings have ever been kind, though I never had the slightest faith in it as a means of removing slavery. Nor have I ever seen why, if it will but confine its efforts to its proper sphere, it need fear the progress of the principles of immediate emancipation. How could the liberation, instruction and conversion of all the blacks in this country impede the establishment of such colonies in Africa as are likely to do any good? All of three million blacks who chose, could then go to aid in introducing the elements of civil society into Africa : and the society could then have a wider field of selection; and better subjects to select. So that a colonization society based on any sound and rational principles ought to advocate, and not oppose the project, of giving freedom, education and religion to all the blacks of our land. Nor is there, in my judgment, any reason why the anti-slavery society should attack a colonization society based on right principles. That is, one which does not profess to be a remedy for slavery, and does not affirm that the blacks cannot rise in this country, because sinful prejudice against them is too strong for even christianity itself to overcome;

and which does advocate and encourage the immediate emancipation of slaves on grounds of duty: Such a society the anti-slavery societies ought not to attack; and I trust would not. But if a society whose professed end is colonization will allow itself to be used as a means of giving greater currency and power to the opinion already too powerful, that even christianity cannot elevate the blacks, in this christian land: if it will see slaves, and even free blacks, compelled to go to Africa with their own consent, by the grinding cruelty of compulsive legislation, and utter no rebuke; but co-operate with the workers of iniquity: if it will still profess to be a remedy for slavery, and oppose the only true remedy: if it will allow itself to be made the channel of popular odium against the advocates of immediate emancipation: if it will allow its leading advocates to mark out as enemies to the public peace and safety, those who are already exposed to instant death by the violence of the mob: if it will never in the hour of peril, stimulate its members to rally round the standard of law and human rights, and stem the tide of brutal violence, and arrest the reign of anarchy: then, by what law, human or divine, does it claim to be exempt from censure? Nay, more: from just and merited abhorrence?

I desire not to be misunderstood. I make no objection to the enterprise of establishing Christian colonies, without ardent spirits, or the spirit of conquest, on the coast of Africa. A part of the work of christianizing Africa, I admit, might be done by them, whilst at the same time my main hope lies in

direct missionary efforts, and to aid them I should prefer. But the establishment of suitable colonies I should never oppose.

But the diversion of the society from its only lawful object, to the work of opposing true principles and disseminating falsehood, and inflaming the public mind against any class of citizens, is a work of gratuitous mischief, which admits of no apology and no excuse. And that all this has been done who can deny?

Most freely do I admit the purity of the motives of many of its friends and advocates. Nor would I censure any man whose own acts have not rendered him worthy of censure. But ought not the friends of this society to remember with what severe scrutiny they mark and impute to the Anti-slavery Society the errors and imperfections and bad spirit of any of its members; and how critically they note its general influence? How often has it been alleged that Christians ought not to join it for reasons like these? And are not the friends of the Colonization Society bound to see, not only what it professes, but what it does?

But if in these days of stormy excitement my voice could be heard, I would entreat the members of that society to pause and see if endless hostility among good men, on so momentous a subject, is all that remains. Or is it true that opposition to the principles of immediate emancipation, and the continuance of the prejudice against the blacks is so essential to the existence and operations of the Colonization Society that without them it must die.

Cannot it survive the death of prejudice and error? If not, it ought to die. But if it has higher and holier motives; if it has ends worthy of a man and a Christian; let it arouse itself to its appropriate work: and cease to impede the friends of universal and immediate emancipation in the pursuit of theirs

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## CHAPTER VIII.

On the question of reestablishing the Observer at Alton there was considerable discussion. I was undecided on the subject, and took no part in the debate. I deeply felt the importance of it, if it could be done: but having exerted myself in vain to induce some of the leading citizens to aid in restoring and defending it, was inclined to consider it as impossible. Still I dared not use any influence to prevent an effort, should there be any hope of success. Many of the friends of the paper had concluded that it was best to remove it to Quincy. But after discussion it was decided to make another attempt to reestablish it at Alton, with the aid of the citizens. The main reasons were:

1. That to fail of reestablishing law at Alton would be a calamity to the state and country; and that to allow the mob to drive it from this place would embolden them to attack it wherever it might go. Whereas in case of a failure, nothing

more would be true of Alton than was already true : that is, that the law had been prostrated by a mob. Retreating could not redeem the character of Alton, or counteract the pernicious influence of the past. But reestablishing the press could.

2. The voice of the nation, at least of the great majority said, it was a question of principle and involves momentous interests ; and approved brother Lovejoy's courage and firmness, and encouraged him to persevere.

3. A member of the convention from Cincinnati expressed in a most decided manner, the opinions of friends at that place, and said that a retreat here would weaken them there, and every where else. He narrated the good effects of reestablishing the Philanthropist in Cincinnati after it had once been destroyed by a mob. These considerations exerted great influence.

In view of these reasons it was decided to make one more effort to arouse the citizens of Alton to restore the majesty of violated law. Thus ended the week ; and the rest of the sabbath was near at hand.

It was deemed desirable that a sermon should be delivered on the subject of slavery ; and being requested by the society to perform the duty, I consented. My main object was to remove prejudice, allay excitement, and state the truth in an unexceptionable form. Having stated the truth I endeavored to show the safety of free and full inquiry, and the danger of allowing the progress of discussion to be arrested by force. I was encouraged by the ap-

parent result to hope that the Spirit of God was beginning to restore soundness to the public mind, and prepared on monday morning to leave the city with some cheering hopes. On my way I was met by a number of citizens and requested to attend a meeting to consult on the expediency of re-establishing the press. Finding that a meeting of citizens was about to agitate the question of duty, I could not refuse to stop at their request, and participate in their deliberations. A large proportion of the meeting were not abolitionists. It was a meeting of citizens of various views on other subjects; but united by common views as it regards the importance of sustaining law.

To open the way for discussion I moved that it is expedient to reestablish the Alton Observer under its present editor.

This opened the way for discussion,

1. As to the principles involved in defending the right of free inquiry.

2. As to the pledge said to have been given by Mr. Lovejoy.

3. As to the use of force to sustain law.

On the first point, I stated it as my opinion that it was a fundamental principle in our government, that there were but two ways of checking the progress of sentiments deemed erroneous, and injurious to the public good: by law, or by argument: and whatever these would not reach, it was useless and criminal to attempt to suppress by force; that I should feel myself called upon to protect an infidel or Mahometan paper, if assailed; or to re-establish

it, if destroyed; as much as a paper designed to advocate the truths of Christianity. To do otherwise would imply a consciousness of error on my own part, or a distrust of the power of God and the truth to defeat error in fair discussion. And that, to allow a mob discretionary power in any case without law, without argument, to prostrate by brute force a public paper, was a virtual surrender of the foundations of our civil government and of all religious toleration. Such an example, I told them, was contagious. That its influence in arousing the spirit of the mob was already visible through the state; and that every freeman in the state had a deep interest in the decision. It was not a local question; and could not be made such. The partizans of mob-law had made a breach upon the state at one of the most prominent points of influence and action; and that, in the providence of God, they stood in the very Thermopylæ of the war—and that it was their solemn duty to be faithful to their country and to God.

On the second point, Mr. Lovejoy stated that he had never given such a pledge as was claimed.—That he did indeed say that it was not his purpose to discuss slavery as much as he had; but that he did not admit that they had any right to regulate his course on the subject; and that he expressly reserved to himself the right to say whatever at any time he might think best. This statement was fully confirmed by a large number who were present at the meeting in question.

On the third point, I stated that it was the duty

of civil rulers to sustain law by force, as an ultimate resort: otherwise they would bear the sword in vain; and not be a terror to evil doers, or a praise to them that do well. And that, to deny that this is right and a duty would dissolve the bonds of civil society at once; and let in an overwhelming tide of anarchy and crime. Laws not thus sanctioned are no laws, but mere advice, mere waste paper, mere cobwebs; and that the moment the defence of law is taken away, the hydra-headed monster of private warfare and revenge would deluge our land with blood.

I exhorted them not to act as individuals, but under the civil authority, and in obedience to law; admitting the right of private self-defence only in those cases in which sudden and unforeseen attacks precluded the possibility of resorting to the law in self-defence: as, when assailed by an assassin, or a highway robber.

In answer to the inquiry, what is meant by the direction—"when they persecute you in one city flee to another"—I gave it as my opinion, that this is a duty when the government itself is the persecutor, or refuses to defend; and under such a government those to whom Christ spoke were. But so long as a government will defend its subjects they ought to appeal to it and not flee. And I did not yet regard it as settled that the government of Alton would not defend Mr. Lovejoy; and that the community ought to be aroused to do their duty. But if the question were once settled that the government of Alton will not defend a citizen against

the violence of a mob, I would exhort him, if persecuted there, to flee elsewhere. But this was the very point in question, whether things had come to this pass. I hoped and believed that they had not. I felt sure that a little energy on the part of leading men could restore the laws to their wonted power.

Application was made to the Mayor for aid and direction; which he readily consented to give. A regular company of city guard was afterwards organized to act under him in accordance with law.

Whilst at this meeting, a request was handed to me, signed by a number of respectable citizens of Upper Alton, not abolitionists, that I would resume the subject of slavery at the point where I left it on the Sabbath, and carry out the principles then advanced to the final removal of the evil from the country; and pledging themselves that there should be no disturbance. Accordingly I preached in the evening; and all was quiet. I endeavored to show the importance of diffusing a kind spirit throughout the nation, and of convincing the slave states of our interest in them; so that the subject might be fairly discussed and they convinced of the safety of the plan, and induced to carry it out. I endeavored also to show that there was no need of collision between the Colonization and Anti-Slavery Societies, if each would take a proper ground, and maintain no false principles of action: and endeavored to point out how this could be done: for I was desirous to arrest the progress of strife between the two societies.

Again, by request of many gentlemen in Alton,  
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not worshipping in the Presbyterian church, I repeated my first sermon on Wednesday evening. During this day threats of violence were made; and in accordance with the direction of the Mayor, arms were placed in a house adjacent to the church, to be used by men designated for the purpose, if needful. Some slight indications of violence occurring, it was at once quelled by the appearance of the guard, and the sermon was closed in quiet. Had it not been for this arrangement, serious acts of violence might have occurred; and those best able to judge do not doubt that it would have been so. Subsequent events do not render it at all improbable.

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## CHAPTER IX.

WE now come to a series of events upon which the final result of all our proceedings was destined to turn. I refer to the meetings of citizens on the second and third of November.

The resolution of the meeting of citizens to re-establish and defend the Observer soon became known; and excited in some minds no little ferment; and probably gave rise to the subsequent meetings. To give a clear insight into the design and proceedings of these meetings, it is necessary to advert to the state of the community in Alton at that time. The whole community might be divided

into four classes. 1. The abolitionists: 2. The friends of law and order who were willing to defend their rights, though they did not agree with them in opinion: 3. Those who professed to be friends of law and order in general, but who permitted their feelings of opposition to the opinions of the abolitionists so much to influence their conduct, that they refused to act in sustaining the law; because, by sustaining the law they thought that they should in fact, be sustaining abolitionists: 4. The mob. Of these classes the first two acted together in defending the press; not as abolitionists, but as friends of law and order, and for the sake of maintaining the great principles of society. Against them was arrayed the mob. The other class in which were found most of the members of the Colonization Society, and of the leading business and professional men of the place, professed to take the ground of neutrality; and to regard the others in the light of hostile parties, and themselves as unexcited, moderate, judicious men, and as adapted to be mediators between the two. Though their feelings were decidedly opposed to the abolitionists, yet in their better judgment they knew that it was wrong to put them down by force. I well knew that in this class lay the whole controlling power of the community; and if they could be brought to take decided ground in defence of law, the work was done. To do this I had sought for some time, but no opportunity was presented to gain access to them in a body. I had prepared the principles which I wished to present to them, at first with the thought of offering them

at a meeting of the Colonization Society which was near at hand; but being convinced that they would be deemed inappropriate, I was deliberating in my own mind the expediency of returning home by the stage.

At this time, as I was walking in the street with Mr. W. S. Gilman, we were met by Rev. J. Hogan. He informed us that there was a terrible state of things, and wished to know if something could not be done to allay the excitement. I expressed it as my opinion, that if certain men would pass certain resolutions which I then had, and act upon them with decision, all would be quiet before sun-down. Mr. Gilman then suggested the calling of a meeting of leading individuals, and Mr. Hogan approved of it and consented to notify them to meet in his store. At this meeting were some of the prominent merchants and professional men, together with some of the clergy.

My main purpose was to convince them of two things.

1. That it was not on the merits of the sentiments of abolitionists which they were called to decide; but simply on the question of sustaining law and order.

2. That it was not a mere question of feeling or expediency; but of duty. That they had no right to be neutral on such a question, involving as it did, the very existence of civil society.

And I confess that I did fondly hope that I could convince them on these points. Accordingly I

laid before them the following resolutions for their approval.

Resolved, 1. That the free communication of thoughts and opinions is one of the invaluable rights of man; and that every citizen may freely speak, write and print on any subject, being responsible for, the abuse of that liberty.

2. That the abuse of this right is the only legal ground for restraining its use.

3. That the question of abuse must be decided solely by a regular civil court, and in accordance with the law, and not by an irresponsible and unorganized portion of the community, be it great or small.

4. For restraining what the law will not reach, we are to depend solely on argument and moral means, aided by the controlling influences of the Spirit of God; and that these means, appropriately used, furnish an ample defense against all ultimate prevalence of false principles and unhealthy excitement.

5. That when discussion is free and unrestrained, and proper means are used, the triumph of truth is certain—and that with the triumph of truth, the return of peace is sure; but that all attempts to check or prohibit discussion, will cause a daily increase of excitement until such checks or prohibitions are removed.

6. That our maintenance of these principles should be independent of all regard to persons or sentiments.

7. That we are more especially called on to main-

tain them in case of unpopular sentiments or persons, as in no other case will any effort to maintain them be needed.

8. That these principles demand the protection of the editor and of the press of the Alton Observer, on grounds of principle solely, and altogether disconnected with approbation of his sentiments, personal character or course as editor of the paper.

9. That on these grounds alone, and irrespective of all political, moral, or religious differences, but solely as American citizens, from a sacred regard to the great principles of civil society, to the welfare of our country, to the reputation and honor of our city, to our own dearest rights and privileges, and those of our children, we will protect the press, the property and the editor of the Alton Observer, and maintain him in the free exercise of his rights, to print and publish whatever he pleases, in obedience to the supreme laws of the land, and under the guidance and directions of the constituted civil authorities, he being responsible for the abuse of this liberty only to the laws of the land.

The principles of these resolutions seemed to me self-evident. Nay, I thought them so clear that all candid men would pass them by an unanimous vote. I therefore did not enlarge upon them; but knowing that a deep-rooted feeling against the abolitionists was liable to blind their minds, I endeavored to overcome its influence by the most powerful considerations.

I endeavored to convince them that with the friends of Mr. Lovejoy it was a question, not of

feeling, but of deep religious principle. That they were not fanatics and enthusiasts, but devoted, conscientious men; and that it was not only wrong but unsafe, to attempt to repress by violence the conscientious efforts of such men. To sustain these views, I read the following extracts from a speech of the Hon. Daniel Webster.

“On the general question of slavery, a great portion of the community is already strongly excited. The subject has not only attracted attention as a question of *Politics*, but has struck a far deeper-toned chord. It has arrested the *Religious* feelings of the country; it has taken strong hold on the *Consciences* of men. He is a rash man, indeed, little conversant with human nature, and especially has he a very erroneous estimate of the character of the people of this country, who supposes that a feeling of this kind is to be *Trifled* with or *Despised*. It will assuredly *Cause* itself to be *Respected*. It may be reasoned with; it may be made willing—I believe it is entirely willing—to fulfil all existing engagements, and all existing duties; to uphold and defend the constitution, as it is established, with whatever regret about some provisions which it does actually contain. But to coerce it into silence—to endeavor to restrain its free expression—to seek to compress and confine it, warm as it is, and more heated as such endeavors would inevitably render it—should all this be attempted, I know nothing even in the *Constitution* or in the *Union* itself, which would not be *Endangered* by the *Explosion* which might follow.”

I also referred to the fact that even Clarkson and Wilberforce, with their coadjutors, names which the world now delights to honor, were, when they first began to oppose the slave-trade, stigmatized as fanatics and enthusiasts: and assured them that it was as vain to attempt to oppose the progress of investigation by exciting popular odium now as then.

I referred them to the fact that the opponents of the abolitionists had the majority in numbers and wealth in Alton; and that if the views of the abolitionists were false, they surely had in that vast majority power of intellect enough to expose them; and that to allow the use of force was to confess that they could not defeat them by argument. I here read the following extracts from papers published in the slave states, and entreated them not to be more zealous in behalf of slaveholders, than they were in their own behalf.

*“ Outrage. We learn from the St. Louis Republican that on the 21st, a printing press which the Rev. Mr. Lovejoy had just received at Alton for the purpose of re-establishing the Observer, was taken from the house where it had been stored, and thrown into the Mississippi. The Observer was tainted with abolitionism, and the people, or a portion of them at least, of Alton, are unwilling that it shall be published at that place. We have before spoken of our regret that the rights of citizens cannot be secured in a land which claims to be governed by law. Mr. Lovejoy has the right of publishing his paper even in Alton, and however we may differ from him in relation to his tenets, we certain-*

ly admire the tenacity with which he clings to them, and the pertinacity with which he asserts his right to disseminate his principles.”—*Lou. Gaz.*

“We agree with our friend of the *Louisville Gazette*, that the rights of Mr. Lovejoy have manifestly been violated. And we will add a query for the consideration of the *violaters*. Do you not admit the truth and moral force of the sentiments promulgated, when you resort to illegal, animal, or brute force to postpone their promulgation?”—*Lexington Intelligencer*.

I appealed to their generous and magnanimous feelings; and asked them if it was honorable for the vast majority to allow the rights of a minority, or an individual, to be trampled on because he is weak.

I observed that in a popular government the rights of minorities, and of individuals ought to be guarded with peculiar care, otherwise they would degenerate into the most odious tyrannies.

I endeavored to convince them that to re-establish law was essential to their temporal interests; and that not to do it would be ruinous.

I reminded them of the infinite value of the opportunity now in their hands to gain a glorious victory in behalf of principle; to wipe off the disgrace which now rested on their city; and to stand higher in the eye of the christian world than ever before: and that, if now lost it could never be recalled.

I adjured them to regard the honor of our country, and the welfare of the civilized world as connected with the fate of our institutions: and warned them against suffering a new stigma to be infixed

on our national character by permitting the permanent triumph of misrule in their city. To sustain these views I read to them from Dr. Channing's letter to H. Clay, the following deeply affecting view of the influence of past scenes of riot on the opinions of the world concerning us as a nation.

“That the cause of republicanism is suffering abroad through the defects and crimes of our countrymen, is as true as that it is regarded with increased skepticism among ourselves. Abroad, republicanism is identified with the United States; and it is certain that the American name has not risen of late in the world. It so happens that whilst writing, I have received a newspaper from England, in which Lynch law is as familiarly associated with our country, as if it were one of our establishments. We are quoted as monuments of the degrading tendencies of popular institutions. When I visited England, fifteen years ago, republican sentiments were freely expressed to me. I should probably hear none now. Men's minds seem to be returning to severer principles of government; and this country is responsible for a part of this change. It is believed abroad that property is less secure among us, order less stable, law less revered, social ties more easily broken, religion less enforced, life held less sacred, than in other countries. Undoubtedly the prejudices of foreign nations, the interests of foreign governments have led to gross exaggerations of evils here. The least civilized parts of the country are made to represent the whole; and occasional atrocities are construed into habits. But

who does not feel that we have given cause of reproach? And shall we fix this reproach and exasperate it into indignation and hatred, by adopting a policy against which the moral sentiments of the Christian world revolt? Shall we make the name of republic "a stench in the nostrils of all nations?"

I reminded them of the connection of their conduct with the welfare of Illinois; and told them that the permanent triumph of the mob in Alton would weaken the power of law throughout the state; and that it was not, and could not be made a question of local interest, since it affected principles involving the rights of all.

In conclusion, I reminded them that they were acting on the great theatre of the world, and in the midst of attentive nations. That the proceedings of this day would ere long be reviewed in Exeter Hall, in London, and in every christian nation; and urged them to rise above local influences and feelings, and act as in view of the civilized world.

Had my audience consisted solely of persons not committed to the mob, the appeal might have been successful. But I noticed before I closed, that a number had come in, who were in public sentiment identified with the instigators or actors in the preceding riotous proceedings.

I did hope, notwithstanding, that among those who were not thus committed, my resolutions would have found an advocate. I was pleading, not for men, but for principles, the importance of which language cannot utter: principles in which are involved all that man holds dear on earth. Before

me were ministers of the gospel, members of various churches, learned civilians, and men of the highest standing in the commercial world. From some of them at least I anticipated a warm response. It was not an hour of excitement or of tumult. I had not before me an infuriated mob: but those who gloried in being esteemed the calm, thoughtful and judicious men of the place: the arbiters of public opinion and the conservators of the peace. Judge then of the chill which fell upon my heart when not a single voice was raised in behalf of principles so sacred; of interests so vast.

The audience seemed to be taken by surprise.—Some observed that they had mistaken the nature of the meeting: others, that they thought the meeting was called for the sake of compromise; and others said nothing.—One moved to lay the resolution on the table.

Another professed to see no use in passing such resolutions. The principles were nothing new; they were already incorporated in our bill of rights, and we could give them no new force by passing them now. He also remarked, that to pass these resolutions was virtually to condemn ourselves; for it could not be denied that some leading men of the city had promoted, or at least connived at what had been done: and it could not be expected that any party should own itself entirely in the wrong.

In behalf of what particular individuals he spoke he did not inform us; but, as he was not contradicted, I suppose that some of the mob were there, according to my previous impressions. Whether they

came in by invitation or by intrusion I have not been informed. At all events their interests were represented as inconsistent with the passage of the resolutions proposed : and as no one objected to these remarks, it seemed to be the sense of the meeting, that they ought to consult not only for the maintenance of the laws, but also for the feelings of the mob, and not require them to acknowledge that they had been entirely in the wrong.

That intelligent men, ministers of the gospel, church members, and civilians should not have seen the grossness of this principle may well excite surprise. And that they should have abstained from passing resolutions the simple import of which was, that they would maintain the law, lest they should censure its violaters, is still more surprising ! But that they should finally appoint a committee of compromise between the friends of law and the mob, after refusing to vote to sustain the law, is a phenomenon that sets even wonder at defiance ! Yet so it was.

A reverend gentleman, after speaking of the spirit of the resolutions as good in general, and as meeting his decided approbation, hoped that they might lead to some compromise by which the contending parties might be united and harmony restored. Another speaker was of the same opinion ; and it was voted that they be referred to a committee.

Of course, as the contending parties were—the friends of the law, and the mob—and as a compromise was to be effected between them by the moderate party, each must be represented in the committee.

Let us now look at the claims of the parties to be reconciled. And first, of the mob.

They claimed the right to demand of Mr. Lovejoy to cease printing in Alton; and if he would not, to compel him by force, by sacking his office, breaking his presses, abusing his person, and threatening his life.

The friends of law claimed that he had an inalienable right to do all that the others forbade; and that the community were sacredly bound by a regard to God and the welfare of society to defend him.

And the duty assigned to the committee was, to relieve the mob from the necessity of confessing that they were entirely wrong; the moderate party from voting to sustain the laws; and finally, by a compromise to unite in harmonious society, the friends and enemies of the law.

It will at once be perceived that to perform such a task, required no common ability. And if the committee did not finally succeed in their work, we shall do them injustice if we do not remember how arduous was the enterprise they undertook.

But, to be serious, I could not contain my surprise when I heard sober and serious men talk of a compromise in such a case. I did think that they would see how hopeless the task, and return to the sure, safe and consistent ground of recommending a maintenance of the law.

Before the meeting closed the following resolution was passed :

“Resolved unanimously by this meeting, That

in the interim between the adjournment and re-assembling hereof, if any infraction of the peace be attempted by any party or set of men, in this community, we will aid to the utmost of our power in the maintenance of the laws."

The object of this has been variously understood. I at the time understood it to refer to the press which was hourly expected. Certain it is, that at this time a steamboat was coming up the river, in which it was supposed the press might be. It is also true that it had been the avowed purpose of the mob to destroy the press as soon as landed; and that boats had been searched and strangers abused and insulted; and in one instance an effort made to throw overboard a box of hardware of a passenger under the idea that the box contained a press. In advocating the resolution it was remarked that it was not necessary to destroy the press at once if at all. The execution of that work might at all events be suspended till the next meeting.

Undersiand it as you will, it evidently implied that either the mob or their leaders were there: That there was there the power to arrest violence, or to say to it, Go on, and "let slip the dogs of war."

Though deeply disappointed in my fond anticipations of good, I did not despair. I reflected that there were men on that committee of high standing and great influence; that they were to report on great and fundamental principles; and that they were connected with a series of transactions which had already arrested the attention of the whole union; and would soon be known through-

out the civilized world. It seemed to me that even a regard to character and reputation, if no higher motive, would induce them to take enlarged and liberal views, such as would be in coincidence with the spirit of the age. However, having done all in my power, I endeavored to commit the case to God; and patiently wait the result.

At this meeting Mr. Lovejoy was not present; nor, as a general fact, any of the leading supporters of the press. Mr. W. S. Gilman is an exception. It was well known that he was a decided supporter of the press, and that he suggested the meeting to Mr. Hogan, in order that the resolutions proposed by me might be passed. But it was the design that the meeting should consist of moderate, influential, and respectable men.

A meeting of the Colonization Society was held in the evening. The leading speakers were, Rev. J. Hogan, Rev. J. M. Peck, Rev. Joel Parker, and one whose name I cannot recall. A favorable opportunity was now presented to inculcate upon the audience the importance of sustaining the laws. Perhaps it may be thought that this is foreign from the object of the society. If so, it would seem to be equally foreign from its object to attack the opinions of the abolitionists; especially as at this time public feeling against them was sufficiently high. Still, in two instances their opinions were pointedly attacked, and one speaker took considerable pains to go out of his way to do it.

## CHAPTER X.

During the next forenoon I did not leave my room. A weight was upon my mind. I felt that momentous interests were at stake; and that there was aid in none but in God. Brother Lovejoy and Hale called in, and we spent a season together in prayer.

Never shall I forget the calmness of Mr. Lovejoy's mind, his sense of the presence of God, and the child-like confidence with which he committed his cause to Him that heareth prayer. How he interceded for the cause of God, and prayed especially for the best good of the community in which he dwelt! He earnestly supplicated for an abiding sense of the presence of God and for strength that he might not betray his cause in the hour of trial.

He was perfectly cool and collected, and awaited the result of the report of the committee with great tranquillity of mind. He deeply regretted that a right decision on principles of such moment had been declined by a select circle of the most influential men in the place, and that under the influence of such an act the question was now to be thrown before a promiscuous assembly, many of whom were so deeply committed to the wrong side. The very reason of calling the meeting was to induce leading men to pledge themselves on the side of law and good order, well knowing that if they would

do it, it would be an easy matter to induce the whole community to do the same. Yet we had some hope in the fact that it seemed almost impossible that a committee including so many intelligent men should dare to hazard their reputation in the eyes of the civilized world by recommending a disregard of principles so plain. At all events, whatever their decision might be, he had made up his mind as to his course. It was not a blind impulse, but a decision founded on reasons. They were these. No effort to defend the press by force under the civil authorities had been made. Hence, though the actual number of the mob was reputed to be small, they had held undisputed sway. And he had no doubt that a decided resistance, even of a comparatively small number of resolute men, under the civil authorities, would be amply sufficient to defend the press. And after the resolution of a large number of citizens to defend it, under the guidance of the civil authority; and especially since the mayor had promised to fulfil his duties as head of the city authorities, Mr. Lovejoy considered it as decided that the press could and would be defended.—Especially as Mr. W. S. Gilman had agreed to deposit it for safe keeping in his store till it could be established in some equally defensible place. The store was of stone, and as it seemed to him impossible to be stormed by a mob. And he thought that a regard for the owners of the store, so highly respected throughout the state, and to whose enterprise and capital the place was so deeply indebted, would almost of itself be a sufficient defense.

It was now to him a question of personal safety. He knew that as an individual he could not always be defended, and that he was liable at any hour to perish by the hand of an assassin or the fury of some midnight mob. His house was at the eastern extremity of Alton, and it was from the centre of business, where his office would be, a long and in some parts lonely walk, during which he could easily be waylaid. He supposed also that the whole pressure of motive would now be made to bear on his love of life and regard to his family, to induce him to flee. And after a long and deliberate view of the case, his friends had decided, that, place the press where you might in this state, in any suitable position, the example of Alton would stimulate the friends of mob-law to assail and endanger his life. Even the fact that he had once left St. Louis seemed now continually to spur them on.

It was to him, therefore, simply a question of duty. Was it his duty to resign the ground at once, and let another take his place; or at all hazards to maintain his post?

But so highly did the great proportion of his readers value him as an editor, and such was the sympathy for him throughout the nation, that his friends felt that the paper would go down at once as soon as he left it; especially under such an editor as the mob would allow. For they saw clearly that it was not his imprudencies, but his sentiments and purposes which were the real ground of offense. It therefore resolved itself in his mind into one simple question; Could he as a friend of God and man de-

sert the cause in which he was engaged to save his life? and on this his decision was unwavering.

He had often expressed his willingness to do any thing which was for the good of the cause which he advocated. But when his friends had pronounced the opinion that there was no gain to be expected, and might be much loss in a removal; and that if he resigned his post as editor the paper would soon die, his mind never wavered again.

All these points were fully discussed at the meeting at his house at which I was not present; but of which I was afterwards informed.

Seeing the position of his mind, I made no effort to change it; for I saw no reason to doubt that the grounds assumed by his friends were true: and much as I loved him and his family, I did not dare to allow my personal feelings to induce me to attempt to divert him from what seemed to him so clearly the path of duty—and to me also, if such were the facts. Moreover, I did most fully expect that, when it was known that he was decidedly resolved to maintain his ground, the opposition would give way, for I could not believe that they were prepared to perpetrate deliberate murder.

I know it is very easy for those not on the spot, and ignorant of the state of moral causes in the community, to lay down the dictates of prudence—in view of results. This is a cheap wisdom and easily gained. But let any one consider our circumstances, and say what better could have been done. It was not a question of self-will, but of principle. We felt for the freedom of the press and

for the welfare of Alton. Alton had always stood high in my feelings and in my judgment. Nor could I make it seem a reality to my mind that a place so honored and so loved could not be redeemed from so deep and deadly disgrace as already rested on her. Her relations to the cause of God; her noble exertions in behalf of literature, religion and morality; her influence on the destinies of our youthful state; rose before my mind, and I could not bear the thought that a place around which so many fond remembrances of the past and so many future hopes were entwined, should be abandoned to an infuriate mob as past recovery. And we felt called on to plead with God, for the sake of his own glory, to interpose; to bring the wickedness of the wicked to an end, and to establish the righteousness of the just.

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## CHAPTER XI.

I HAD meditated with much anxiety on the course of thought best adapted to induce the assembly to resolve to maintain the laws. But on arriving at the meeting I was soon relieved from this responsibility. Though I was requested to attend the first meeting and offer the resolutions on which the report was now to be made: and though, in common with every subject of our free government, my dearest interests were involved in the decision,

yet by the first vote I was precluded alike from voting and debate. I sat down in silent sadness to await the result.

After the meeting was opened the chairman of the committee made the following report.

“The committee appointed to take under consideration certain resolutions submitted at our last meeting, beg leave to report:— That they have given to those resolutions a deliberate and candid examination, and are constrained to say that, however they may approve their general spirit, they do not consider them, as a whole, suited to the exigency which has called together the citizens of Alton. It is notorious, that fearful excitements have grown out of collisions of sentiment between two great parties on the subject, and that these excitements have led to excesses on both sides deeply to be deplored. Too much of crimination and recrimination have been indulged. On the one hand, the anti-abolitionists have been charged with a heartless cruelty, a reckless disregard of the rights of man, and an insidious design, under deceptive pretexts, to perpetuate the foul stain of slavery. They have been loaded with many and most opprobrious epithets, such as pirates, man-stealers, &c. &c. On the other hand, the abolitionists have been too indiscriminately denounced as violent disturbers of the good order of society, wilfully incendiary and disorganizing in their spirit, wickedly prompting servile insurrections, and traitorously encouraging infractions of the constitution, tending to disunion, violence, and bloodshed. These uncharitable im-

peachments of motives have led to an appalling crisis, demanding of every good citizen the exertion of his utmost influence to arrest all acts of violence, and to restore harmony to our once peaceful and prosperous, but now distracted city. It is not to be disguised, that parties are now organizing and arming for a conflict, which may terminate in a train of mournful consequences. Under such circumstances have we been convened. And your committee are satisfied that nothing short of a generous forbearance, a mild spirit of conciliation, and a yielding compromise of conflicting claims, can compose the elements of discord, and restore quiet to this agitated community. They are therefore forced to regard the resolutions under consideration, as falling short of the great end in view—as demanding too much of concession on one side and too little on the other.—Neither party can be expected to yield every thing, and to acknowledge themselves exclusively in the wrong. In this there is no compromise. There must be a mutual sacrifice of prejudices, opinions and interests to accomplish the desired reconciliation—such a sacrifice as led to the adoption of the great charter of American freedom, which has secured to ourselves, and which promises a continuance to our posterity, of the blessed fruits of peace, prosperity, and union. Whilst, therefore, we fully and freely recognize the justness of the principles engrafted upon our constitution, that the free communication of thoughts and opinions is one of the invaluable rights of man, and that every citizen may freely speak, write and print on any subject, being respon-

sible for the abuse of that liberty; that the abuse of this right is the only legal ground for restraining its use; that the question of abuse must be decided solely by a regular civil court, and in accordance with the law, and not by an irresponsible and unorganized portion of the community, be it great or small—your committee would, with earnest importunity, urge as a means of allaying the acrimony of party strife, the unanimous adoption of the following preamble and resolutions:

“Whereas, it is of the utmost importance that peace, order, and a due regard to law, should be restored to our distracted community; and whereas, in all cases of conflicting opinions about rights and privileges, each party should yield some things in the spirit and form of compromise: Therefore

“Resolved, 1. That a strong confidence is entertained that our citizens will abstain from all undue excitements, discountenance every act of violence to person or property, and cherish a sacred regard for the great principles contained in our Bill of Rights.

“2. That it is apparent to all good citizens, that the exigencies of the place require a course of moderation in relation to the discussion of principles in themselves deemed right, and of the highest importance; and that it is no less a dictate of duty than expediency, to adopt such a course in the present crisis.

“3. That so far as your committee have possessed the means of ascertaining the sense of this community, in relation to the establishment of a religious newspaper, such a course would, at a suitable time,

and under the influence of judicious proprietors and editors, contribute to the cause of religion and good citizenship, and promote the prosperity of the city and country.

“4. That while there appears to be no disposition to prevent the liberty of free discussion, through the medium of the press or otherwise, as a general thing, it is deemed a matter indispensable to the peace and harmony of this community, that the labors and influence of the late editor of the Observer be no longer identified with any newspaper establishment in this city.

“5. That whereas it has come to the knowledge of your committee, that the late editor of the Observer has voluntarily proposed to the proprietors and stockholders of the Alton Observer, to relinquish his interest and connection with that paper, if, in the opinion of his friends, that course were expedient—your committee consider that such a course would highly contribute to the peace and harmony of the place, and indicate on the part of the friends of the Observer a disposition to do all in their power to restore the city to its accustomed harmony and quiet.

“6. That we would not be understood as reflecting in the slightest degree upon the private character or motives of the late editor of the Alton Observer, by any thing contained in the foregoing resolutions.”

Probably a report was never made in circumstances of greater interest, or on principles of

higher moment: and as it was evidently drawn up after much deliberation it merits a careful scrutiny.

The great object of the resolutions on which the report was based was, to secure the defense of a citizen in the exercise of his inalienable rights against the violence of a mob. "As a whole" they consisted of two parts: a statement of principles; and a resolution to act according to them. To these it seems the committee gave a "deliberate and candid examination;" and what is the result? They approve their general spirit, but do not consider them as a whole suited to the exigency which had called them together. "The justice of the principles of the first three resolutions they fully and freely recognize;" of course the only thing to which they object is, the rest of the resolutions—designed to put them in practice.

The committee then admit that Mr. Lovejoy has the right to print what he pleases; and to be deprived of this right only for abusing it; and that the question of abuse is to be settled by law, and not by a mob. They fully and freely recognize the justice of these principles. Then why not recommend that they be enforced? Why not speak out in tones of manly indignation, and rebuke the violators of law, and call on all who love their country to rally to its defense? If the first three resolutions are true, why are not the last six suited to the exigency? Are they false? Do the committee mean to say that, in opposing erroneous views, such as the law will not reach, we are *not* to depend solely on argument and moral means aided by the Spirit

of God? and that these means are *not* an ample defense against error and excitement? Do they hold that, in addition to these, mobs are sometimes needed? Do they believe that when discussion is free and proper means are used the triumph of the truth is *not* certain? and that the triumph of the truth will *not* produce peace? And do they mean to say that all attempts to check discussion will *not* produce excitement? And do they mean to advocate and justify the suppression of discussion by force? Do they believe that we ought not to maintain these principles without respect to parties or persons? Do they mean that the right of speech is to be protected only in the case of popular opinions, where it needs no protection, and to be left defenseless in case of unpopular opinions, where protection is needed? Did they mean to say to the citizens of Alton, You are under no obligation to defend Mr. Lovejoy or his paper on the ground of principle, and that a sacred regard to the principles of society do not require it? Are the committee willing before the civilized world to avow sentiments like these? If not: if the resolutions are true, why not recommend them?

But we are told they are not adapted to the emergency which had called them together. And what is this emergency? A mob had attempted to silence a press, and expel an editor from Alton. The resolutions recommended that this attempt should be resisted and the liberty of the press maintained; and gave reasons for so doing. Now, why are not these resolutions adapted to the emergency?

Is it possible that the committee did not see what must be the influence of such a report on the mob? We approve of the principles of the laws, but a resolution to maintain them is not adapted to the present crisis! Is it possible that they did not see that if they had proposed a resolution to violate them, its influence could not have been more deadly?

The reasons assigned for refusing to recommend the resolutions are truly surprising. They are in brief that two parties were now organizing for a conflict, which may terminate in a train of mournful consequences unless some compromise is made.

It is indeed true that two parties did exist as it regards the truth or falsehood of the opinions of the abolitionists; and as it regards the expediency of forming a state society; and as it regards the time and mode of carrying on the discussions. But on these points the abolitionists had never refused to compromise. They had offered to do all in their power to unite good men and avert division; and all their efforts had been vain; and a plan was adopted to vote down all discussion. It was not *moderate* discussion which their opponents demanded, but *no* discussion. Not that Mr. Lovejoy should print his opinions moderately but that he should not print them at all.

Now, at the moment this claim was made, it ceased to be a party question. It assumed a new ground and changed its nature entirely. It was now the question, Shall a citizen, guilty of no crime and without judicial process, be stripped of all his rights? And whoever undertakes to do

this is no longer a party but a mob. And this was the precise attitude of affairs at this time. It was not a question between abolitionists and anti-abolitionists; but between the friends of law and a mob; and are these the parties intended by the committee?

The committee further say that excitements between these parties have led to excesses *on both sides*, deeply to be deplored. Is it so? Of the mob the assertion is true. But what had the friends of law and order done? Nothing but strive to sustain the law. And is this an excess deeply to be deplored?

Again, they say, too much crimination and re-crimination have been indulged: and specify charges mutually made by the parties. That the abolitionists have thus been charged is true. I heard these and numerous other false charges publicly made against them in Alton. But abolitionists did not render railing for railing. Nothing of the kind specified was said or hinted at in the convention. Nor did Mr. Lovejoy or his friends ever load their opponents with opprobrious epithets, as pirates, manstealers, &c. Indeed he was always very cautious not to use such language: and so far as I know, all the proceedings of the abolitionists at Alton were, at all times, gentlemanly and decorous.

The simple fact is, and no sophistry can hide it, that Mr. Lovejoy's rights, and those of all his subscribers had been assailed by a mob: and nothing was needed to restore quiet but that the mob should let them alone. But the mob would not; and for

this reason the friends of law armed themselves to repel illegal violence.

The recommendation of the committee instead of the resolution to support the laws is no less surprising. What is it? A compromise! And no less surprising are the reasons for this recommendation. That neither party can be expected to yield every thing, and own itself entirely in the wrong.

Now, for what were the friends of law arming? To assail any one? To prostrate and destroy a press? No. To endanger the community? No. For what then? To defend an innocent fellow citizen's property and life, if assailed. Is there any thing so alarming in all this? What else ought a good citizen to do? Is there any thing to be conceded here?

For what were the mob arming? To break open a store, and destroy a press, and to fire the store and kill its defenders if resistance was made! Ought not all this to be conceded by the mob?

Now, do the committee think, that to require of them to abstain from such atrocious deeds, and to observe the laws, and to call on all good citizens to aid in defeating them if they attempted to execute their nefarious plans "falls short of the great end in view" and "demands too much of concession;" and that "neither party can be expected to yield every thing, and to acknowledge themselves exclusively in the wrong?"

Is it not then true, that the violator of law, who breaks open a house and destroys the property or life of his neighbor is exclusively in the wrong?

And if so, is it requiring too much to call on him to acknowledge the truth? And is it too great a concession for a thief to stop stealing; or for any other miscreant to stop committing burglary, arson or murder? The resolutions demanded nothing else; and do the committee think this too much?

Nor can I understand what the committee mean by a "mutual sacrifice of prejudices, opinions and interests," such "as led to the adoption of the great charter of American freedom." The parties in this case are, on the one hand the friends of law; on the other, the mob. Between these it seems a compromise is to be effected like that which produced our national union. But how is this possible? The great question on which compromise was needed came up between the free and the slave states. Which are to be represented by the mob, and which by the friends of law? And what similarity is there in the cases? It was in one case a union between equal and independent states, none of whom had any power over the other, and yet the union was essential for mutual defense. Hence, rather than not unite, they let evils remain to remove which they had no power. Is this a reason why a community should concede impunity to their own citizens, over whom they have power when they violate the laws?

But omitting these considerations, what is the compromise recommended by the committee? The friends of law were contending for nothing but a principle of infinite moment; and on the other hand the mob were aiming to overthrow it. And how

is this matter to be compromised? Why, the principle is to be given up and the mob are to carry the day! It is essential, they say, to the peace of Alton that Mr. Lovejoy no longer edit a paper there. And is this a compromise? What more had the mob ever asked than this? For what else had they abused the person and destroyed the presses of Mr. Lovejoy? Was it not to compel him to cease publishing a paper in Alton? Was it not for this they had broken open and ravaged his office and destroyed press after press? Yet to this worthy party all that they ask is to be granted, and to the friends of law and order, nothing. Is this a compromise? But it may be said, that, if the friends of Mr. Lovejoy had been willing to give him up, the citizens of Alton would have allowed them to have a religious paper at a suitable time, and under judicious editors and proprietors. But it was not for this they asked. They had a right to have it without any such leave. All that they asked for was the maintenance of the principle, that no editor shall be silenced by a mob: and in losing this they lost all. And in giving up this point to the mob, the committee gave them all.

And are we to suppose that the committee saw the full range of the tremendous principles here laid down; or did some strange fatality blind their eyes? Judging from their own report they were utterly unconscious of what they had done; for they say,

“That a strong confidence is entertained that our citizens will abstain from all undue excitements, discountenance every act of violence to person or

property, and cherish a sacred regard for the great principles contained in our Bill of Rights."

That they had such a strong confidence it does not become me to deny. But I may well ask, Had they any reason to expect such a result from any thing which they had done? What had they done? They had refused to recommend the maintenance of law; had yielded to every demand of the mob, and had thrown the whole of their influence against those who were struggling to resist them:—and then confidently hope for good order and peace! As well might they have bid the incendiary fire a city whilst the winds raged high and then expressed the confident hope that all its inhabitants would enjoy uninterrupted and tranquil repose. And as they sowed so did they reap. Let him who looks for evidence read the records of the following tuesday night; and in the outrages of a drunken and infuriated mob, and in scenes of ARSON and MURDER he will find horrid and heart sickening proof.

It will be noticed that these resolutions are not designed to tell Mr. Lovejoy what as a Christian he ought to do: nor to express an opinion that he ought for the sake of the peace of Alton to give way to the mob. They had a right to express such an opinion if they thought so. But Mr. Lovejoy was still to be his own judge; and if he conscientiously decided not to go they were bound to defend him. But the resolutions were not addressed to him. They were addressed to citizens of Alton, and designed to mark out a course for them to pursue.

Had it been their intention only to inform Mr. Lovejoy that as a Christian he ought to give up his paper, and that his friends ought to consent; and that still, if they thought otherwise they would protect him; they ought first of all to have passed a resolution assuring him of unconditional protection; and then to request him as a Christian to retire.

But this they refused to do. The vote to protect him they could not recommend; and they did say that it was essential to the peace of Alton that he should not edit a paper there. And this they said, not to him, but to the citizens of Alton.

I do not think that the main body of the committee had any idea of the bearings of what they were to recommend. The fatal step that misled them was consenting for a moment to put the friends of law on a level with the mob; and then to try to effect a compromise between them. From men so intelligent, who could have expected a mistake so fatal? In so plain a case as an attack of ruffians and robbers on an unoffending citizen, and through him on law and civil society itself it did seem to us that they would see, that the welfare of the whole country, nay of the civilized world, required every good citizen to refuse to look at them in any other light than as parricides of their country; and not to degrade those who still revered the laws, even by insinuating that they were only a party on a level with a mob. Nor could we conceive what could be imagined or thought of in the way of compromise. It did not occur to us that so intelligent a committee would advance so gross a doctrine as

that a community has a right to absolve itself from the performance of its most solemn duties—and call this a compromise. It seemed to us that the debtor might as well refuse to pay his debts, and call this a compromise. It seemed to us that protection is a debt due from community to every citizen; and that he has an undoubted right to claim it; and that it is more grossly absurd and unjust for a community to talk of compromising it away than for a debtor to propose to compromise away his debts. Still less did we imagine that a principle so flagrantly immoral would be dignified by a comparison with concessions made to each other by equal and independent states, none of whom were under any political obligation to come into union with the rest:—That the glorious union of our fathers would be sunk to the level of a union between the supporters and the violators of the law, on the ground that the supporters of the law should concede to its violators the full gratification of their wishes. Yet so it was.

The idea that the supporters of Mr. Lovejoy were not acting as abolitionists, but as friends of law and good order, and that a large portion of them were not abolitionists, and that they were not a party, but merely friends of their country and opponents of mob law, does not seem to have occurred to the committee at all.

## CHAPTER VI.

After the report had been read by the Honorable chairman, one of the committee commented on it at some length: and seeming to assume it as capable of no doubt that Mr. Lovejoy's friends must see the reasonableness of so generous a compromise, and its eminent adaptedness to promote the public peace; proceeded in a compassionate strain to express his sympathy for the unhappy man whose rights were to be sacrificed as a peace offering on the altar of the demon of anarchy. He regarded him as an unfortunate man, whose hand was against every man and every man's hand against him; and hoped that they would disgrace him as little as possible, and remember that he had a wife and family dependent upon him for support. He was as mild and calm as he knew how to be; for he seemed to think it was appropriate that he should be so whilst thus negotiating such a treaty of peace.

But the committee were not unanimous in these proceedings. There was one honourable exception, Mr. Winthrop S. Gilman. He immediately arose and laid in a decided protest, alleging it as his opinion "that the rigid enforcement of the law would prove the only sure protection of the rights of citizens; and the only safe remedy for similar excitements in future."

As brother Lovejoy rose to reply to the speech above mentioned, I watched his countenance with deep interest, not to say anxiety. I saw no tokens of disturbance. With a tranquil, self possessed air, he went up to the bar within which the chairman sat, and in a tone of deep, tender and subdued feeling, spoke as follows: \*

"I feel, Mr. Chairman, that this is the most solemn moment of my life. I feel, I trust, in some measure the responsibilities which at this hour I sustain to these, my fellow citizens, to the church of which I am a minister, to my country, and to God. And let me beg of you before I proceed further to construe nothing I shall say as being disrespectful to this assembly. I have no such feeling: far from it. And if I do not act or speak according to their wishes at all times, it is because I cannot conscientiously do it.

"It is proper I should state the whole matter as I understand it before this audience. I do not stand here to argue the question as presented by the report of the committee. My only wonder is that the Hon. gentleman the chairman of that committee, for whose character I entertain great respect, though I have not the pleasure of his personal acquaintance, my only wonder is how that gentleman could have brought himself to submit such a report.

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\* At my request immediately after the meeting he wrote down all that he could recall of his speech, which was extempore; I from memory added the rest.

† Hon. Cyrus Edwards, senator from Madison county and the whig candidate for governor.

“Mr. Chairman, I do not admit that it is the business of this assembly to decide whether I shall or shall not publish a newspaper in this city. The gentlemen have, as the lawyers say, made a wrong issue. I have the *right* to do it. I know that I have the right freely to speak and publish my sentiments, subject only to the laws of the land for the abuse of that right. This right was given me by my Maker; and is solemnly guarantied to me by the constitution of these United States and of this state. What I wish to know of you is whether you will protect me in the exercise of this right; or whether, as heretofore, I am to be subjected to personal indignity and outrage. These resolutions, and the measures proposed by them are spoken of as a compromise—a compromise between two parties. Mr. Chairman, this is not so. There is but one party here. It is simply a question whether the law shall be enforced, or whether the mob shall be allowed, as they now do, to continue to trample it under their feet, by violating with impunity the rights of an innocent individual.

“Mr. Chairman, what have I to compromise? If freely to forgive those who have so greatly injured me, if to pray for their temporal and eternal happiness, if still to wish for the prosperity of your city and state, notwithstanding all the indignities I have suffered in it; if this be the compromise intended, then do I willingly make it. My rights have been shamefully, wickedly outraged; this I know, and feel, and can never forget. But I can and do freely forgive those who have done it.

“But if by a compromise is meant that I should cease from doing that which duty requires of me, I cannot make it. And the reason is, that I fear God more than I fear man. Think not that I would lightly go contrary to public sentiment around me. The good opinion of my fellow men is dear to me, and I would sacrifice any thing but principle to obtain their good wishes; but when they ask me to surrender this, they ask for more than I can—than I dare give. Reference is made to the fact that I offered a few days since to give up the editorship of the “Observer,” into other hands. This is true, I did so, because it was thought or said by some that perhaps the paper would be better patronised in other hands. They declined accepting my offer, however, and since then we have heard from the friends and supporters of the paper in all parts of the state. There was but one sentiment among them. And this was that the paper could be sustained in no other hands than mine. It is also a very different question, whether I shall voluntarily, or at the request of friends, yield up my post; or whether I shall forsake it at the demand of a mob. The former I am at all times ready to do, when circumstances occur to require it, as I will never put my personal wishes or interests in competition with the cause of that Master whose minister I am. But the latter, be assured, I NEVER will do. God, in his providence—so say all my brethren, and so I think—has devolved upon me the responsibility of maintaining my ground here; and, Mr. Chairman, I am determined to do it. A voice comes to me from

Maine, from Massachusetts, from Connecticut, from New-York, from Pennsylvania; yea from Kentucky, from Mississippi, from Missouri; calling upon me in the name of all that is dear in heaven or earth, to stand fast; and by the help of God, I WILL STAND. I know I am but one and you are many. My strength would avail but little against you all. You can crush me if you will; but I shall die at my post, for I cannot and will not forsake it.

“Why should I flee from Alton? Is not this a free state? When assailed by a mob at St. Louis, I came hither, as to the home of freedom and of the laws. The mob has pursued me here, and why should I retreat again? Where can I be safe if not here? Have not I a right to claim the protection of the laws? What more can I have in any other place? Sir, the very act of retreating will embolden the mob to follow me wherever I go. No, sir; there is no way to escape the mob, but to abandon the path of duty: and that, God helping me, I will never do.

“It has been said here, that my hand is against every man, and every man’s hand against me. The last part of the declaration is too painfully true. I do indeed find almost every hand lifted against *me*; but against whom in this place has my hand been raised? I appeal to every individual present; whom of you have I injured? Whose character have I traduced? Whose family have I molested? Whose business have I meddled with? If any, let him rise here and testify against me. ———No one answers.

“And do not your resolutions say that you find nothing against my private or personal character? And does any one believe that if there was any thing to be found, it would not be found and brought forth? If in any thing I have offended against the law, I am not so popular in this community as that it would be difficult to convict me. You have courts, and judges and juries; they find nothing against me. And now you come together for the purpose of driving out a confessedly innocent man, for no cause but that he dares to think and speak as his conscience and his God dictate. Will conduct like this stand the scrutiny of your country? of posterity? above all, of the judgment-day? For remember, the Judge of that day is no respecter of persons. Pause, I beseech you, and reflect. The present excitement will soon be over; the voice of conscience will at last be heard. And in some season of honest thought, even in this world, as you review the scenes of this hour, you will be compelled to say, “He was right; he was right.”

“But you have been exhorted to be lenient and compassionate; and in driving me away to affix no unnecessary disgrace upon me. Sir, I reject all such compassion. You cannot disgrace me. Scandal and falsehood and calumny have already done their worst. My shoulders have borne the burthen till it sits easy upon them. You may hang me up, as the mob hung up the individuals of Vicksburgh! You may burn me at the stake, as they did McIntosh at St. Louis: or, you may tar and feather me, or throw me into the Mississippi, as you have often

threatened to do; but you cannot disgrace me. I, and I alone, can disgrace myself; and the deepest of all disgrace would be, at a time like this, to deny my Master by forsaking his cause. He died for me; and I were most unworthy to bear his name, should I refuse, if need be, to die for him.

“Again, you have been told that I have a family, who are dependent on me; and this has been given as a reason, why I should be driven off as gently as possible. It is true, Mr. Chairman, I am a husband and a father; and this it is, that adds the bitterest ingredient to the cup of sorrow I am called to drink. I am made to feel the wisdom of the Apostle’s advice: “It is better not to marry.” I know, sir, that in this contest I stake not my life only, but that of others also. I do not expect my wife will ever recover the shock received at the awful scenes, through which she was called to pass, at St. Charles. And how was it the other night, on my return to my house? I found her driven to the garret, through fear of the mob, who were prowling round my house. And scarcely had I entered the house ere my windows were broken in by the brickbats of the mob; and she so alarmed, that it was impossible for her to sleep or rest that night. I am hunted as a partridge upon the mountains. I am pursued as a felon through your streets; and to the guardian power of the law I look in vain for that protection against violence, which even the vilest criminal may claim.

“Yet think not that I am unhappy. Think not that I regret the choice that I have made. While

all around me is violence and tumult, all is peace within. An approving conscience, and the rewarding smile of God, is a full recompense for all that I forego and all that I endure. Yes, sir, I enjoy a peace which nothing can destroy. I sleep sweetly and undisturbed, except when awaked by the brickbats of the mob.

“No, sir, I am not unhappy. I have counted the cost, and stand prepared freely to offer up my all in the service of God. Yes, sir, I am fully aware of all the sacrifice I make, in here pledging myself to continue this contest to the last.—(Forgive these tears—I had not intended to shed them—and they flow not for myself but others.)—But I am commanded to forsake father and mother and wife and children for Jesus’ sake: and as his professed disciple I stand prepared to do it. The time for fulfilling this pledge in my case, it seems to me, has come. Sir, I dare not flee away from Alton. Should I attempt it, I should feel that the angel of the Lord with his flaming sword was pursuing me wherever I went. It is because I fear God that I am not afraid of all who oppose me in this city. No, sir, the contest has commenced here; and here it must be finished. Before God and you all, I here pledge myself to continue it, if need be, till death. If I fall, my grave shall be made in Alton.”

I have been affected oftentimes with the power of intellect and eloquence; but never was I so overcome as at this hour. He made no display; there was no rhetorical decoration; no violence of action.

All was native truth, and deep pure and tender feeling. Many a hard face did I see wet with tears, as he struck the chords of feeling to which God made the soul to respond. Even his bitter enemies wept. As for me I could not endure it. I laid down my head and gave way to my feelings without control. When he had closed I could not doubt that the whole audience was convinced that he was right; and that, if the authors of the report would have said so, and exhorted to defend him, it would have carried the whole audience with electric power.

But no ! their whole influence was again to be thrown against the law and right :—and a minister of the gospel was to lead the way.

As the reverend gentleman arose to reply, it seemed to me that he found it hard to rally his powers and return to the charge; but at last he did; and endeavored to bring in the holy word of God to aid in such a cause.

His main position was, that all things that were right were not, of course, expedient; which, to subserve his purpose, must mean that, although the principles of rectitude require a community to defend its members, yet it is not always expedient so to do. Accordingly, he seemed to think it of no use to contend for abstract rights. He mentioned the case of the brethren who let Paul down the walls of Damascus in a basket when persecuted by the city authorities under Aretas a Roman officer, as a precedent for the supporters of Mr. Lovejoy to follow here. As though he considered Alton a heathen city; and the civil authorities, with the

mayor at their head, backed up by the power of the Union, were the persecutors. Otherwise the case is nothing to the point. He, in fact, first exhorted a christian city not to protect Mr. Lovejoy; and then exhorted his friends on this precedent, to aid him to flee; because, forsooth, they would not protect him. He also alluded to Mr. Lovejoy's pledge: but was corrected by Rev. F. W. Graves; who stated, without contradiction, that Mr. Lovejoy expressly reserved to himself the right to say what he should think fit on the subject. Who also stated the change in Mr. Lovejoy's opinions, his communication to the leading friends and supporters of the paper, and their advice to him to proceed as he thought best. He also stated the reasons why the friends of the Observer considered it a duty not to retreat, and referred to the state of public opinion in all parts of the Union as sanctioning their course.

A member of the committee now rose and delivered a speech unequalled by any thing I ever heard for an excited, bitter, vindictive spirit. The reason for his change of manner seemed to lie in the fact, that although he and his friends had gone so far in making most generous compromises; yet Mr. Lovejoy and his supporters actually refused to make any at all. He seemed to think that therefore the truce was now broken; and that he was authorized to come down on the abolitionists in great wrath, which he accordingly did. He assailed Mr. Lovejoy's character and motives, and those of his friends, in a style of violent invective, such as I had never heard before. He seemed desirous of lashing the assembly

into instant fury; and threatened to proclaim hostility against the abolitionists in all the intercourse of social life; and to sunder all the ties which bound them to society. He endeavored to represent the public sentiment in the nation in behalf of law and order as expressed by the press, as an outrageous attempt to force an editor on them whom they did not like : and called on them to resist the usurpation. Finally, he withdrew all of his part of the compromise as it regards a paper, and offered a resolution not only that the Alton Observer should not be continued, but that no paper of like spirit and principles, should be published in the place. He also stated in this, or in some subsequent speech, that it was not Mr. Lovejoy against whom they objected, but his principles : and that if any man, even Daniel Webster, Henry Clay, or Andrew Jackson should come there to discuss them, it would make no difference.

Of the truth of this sentiment there can be no doubt. I had long been convinced of it, though I did not expect that any one would be so impolitic as publicly to confess it before the world. It deserves the candid attention of certain editors, who would fain have us believe that had it not been for Mr. Lovejoy's imprudences, he might have printed what he would.

The chairman of the committee seemed to be somewhat alarmed at the violence of his coadjutor, and rose to remonstrate against the passage of the resolution and the intemperance of the speaker. He adverted to the need of calmness in our delibera-

tions, and to the disgrace which would ensue, "should the meeting break up in a row." The motion was laid on the table, but finally adopted.

Judge Hawley, who followed, took true and honorable ground on the subject of free inquiry; and as a false impression has been extensively received on the subject, it ought distinctly to be stated to his credit, that, though he declared his disbelief either of the truth or utility of the sentiments of the abolitionists; yet he maintained that they ought to have the rights of free inquiry, and of publishing what they would. He said he should not care if they paved the streets of Alton with their papers: if he did not believe them he would not read them: and his design in his resolution was to disapprove of illegal violence, without committing himself as an abolitionist: and he offered it as a substitute for the report of the committee.

The discussion then became general and desultory, during which many remarks were made severely reflecting on Mr. Lovejoy. By a member of the committee—a professor of religion and an eastern man—he was compared to one of the deluded votaries of the impostor Matthias, who was really pious but led away by enthusiastic excitement. By another speaker he was compared to an insane person, who in court deemed all around him insane but himself. And after the effects of Mr. Lovejoy's appeal had thus been obliterated; and that very much by the aid of professedly pious men; the resolutions against him and his paper were

carried; and all the items included in the so called compromise with his supporters were withdrawn.

The mayor proposed the following vote:

“Resolved, that as citizens of Alton, and the friends of order, peace and constitutional law, we regret that persons and editors from abroad have seen proper to interest themselves so conspicuously in the discussion and agitation of a question, in which our city is made the principal theatre.”

Against whom it was designed to operate each man was left to judge for himself: but as it was passed by acclamation it was evidently understood to reflect on all persons or editors who had censured the proceedings of the mob and endeavored as friends to the place to arouse its citizens to a sense of duty. In its bearings on myself it was not eminently decorous after I had been invited by the originators of the meeting to attend.

In conclusion, it is only to be noted that, when a resolution was proposed, pledging themselves to aid the mayor in case of violence it was objected to as needless, since it was already their duty so to do. Notwithstanding this standing obligation to aid in suppressing violence, they had already resolved so to do *until this meeting*: and when a resolution of the same import was again proposed they refused to pass it. Comment is needless.—Nor need we wonder at the result. What else could be expected after a report, declining to recommend the maintenance of law in defense of the rights of Mr. Lovejoy, had been made by so intelligent a committee, and adopted by the assembly?

Thus closed this remarkable meeting. As calling out an effervescence of excited feeling it has nothing to distinguish it from other tumultuous popular assemblies. But in one particular it will, it is devoutly to be hoped, remain peculiar and alone. It was called to act on principles than which none can be conceived more sacred and more indispensable: to maintain all that man holds dear on earth. These principles were distinctly laid before them; and they were solemnly warned that the eyes of the nation and of the world were upon them; and an opportunity was before them for obtaining glory that should never die. Still, in view of it all, they chose to occupy the ground on which they now stand; and on it to await the judgment of the civilized world. What that judgment will be, no one can doubt who reflects on the purpose of God to emancipate the world by the truth: and that his purposes are defeated so soon as the right of free discussion expires.

The ultimate effects of the meeting we soon shall see. The immediate effect of brother Lovejoy's speech was very remarkable and decided. In spite of prejudice it extorted an involuntary tribute of respect for his loftiness of soul, and caused an absolute certainty in every mind, of friend or foe, that he would never abandon his post. That question it settled. I could see and feel that on that point all doubt had left every mind. There may have been, and probably was, previously, a hope that by constant efforts to intimidate and annoy him, he might be induced finally to leave Alton.

But I could see that that hope was thoroughly extinguished in every heart. That view of the subject was dropped; and all conversation proceeded upon the supposition that no one expected it.

It was of course a necessary conclusion that, either his antagonists would finally relinquish their efforts in despair, or arouse themselves to a decided attempt to destroy him. Which they would do it was hard to decide. From many things which I saw during the following three days I was led to hope that they were disposed to relinquish their efforts. One of the most influential of them was overheard to say, that it was of no use to go on destroying presses, as there was money enough at the east to bring new ones as fast as they could destroy them; and that it was best to let the fanatics alone. I hoped they would do so; and so did Br. Lovejoy. But God saw fit to disappoint our hopes. The days that I was there spending with him were destined to be the last of his life. His work was nearly done; the hour of his martyrdom and of his reward was near at hand.

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### CHAPTER XIII.

Let us proceed to the closing scene. Fully to understand the course of events, the division made of the community, in giving an account of the meeting, should be borne in mind: and to that division

another class should now be added; the magistrates of the city.

Mr. Lovejoy having decided on his course, the friends of law and order made their arrangements for the defence of his press. Personal violence, or an attempt to murder him was not expected. It was supposed that the main effort, if any were made, would be to destroy the press as it was landed. We all felt that if once deposited in Godfrey & Gilman's store it would be safe. Great difficulty was encountered in obtaining a special constable to direct the friends of law in case of an attack, under the authority of the mayor. The mayor himself did not refuse to act; but as it might be inconvenient to find him when most needed, it was considered important to have one of the supporters of the press appointed as special constable on any sudden emergency. Though the mayor acceded to the proposal it was from time to time delayed, and finally it was not carried into effect. The mayor, however, still consented to direct their movement when called upon.

On monday, Mr. W. S. Gilman was informed that the press was at St. Louis on board a boat which would probably arrive at Alton about evening. He immediately sent an express to the captain of the boat requesting him to delay the hour of his arrival until three o'clock at night, in order to avoid an affray with the rioters. This movement was successful. The spies of the mob watched for the arrival of boats for some time; but late in the evening seemed to give up the expectation of any arrival that night, and retired.

Meantime the supporters of the press met at Mr. Gilman's store to the number of thirty or more; and, as before stated, organized themselves into a volunteer company according to law, and spent the night in the store. At the appointed hour the boat arrived, and the press was safely landed; the mayor being present. All arrangements had been made with such judgment, and the men were stationed at such commanding points, that an attack would have been vain. But it was not made. A horn was indeed sounded, but no one came.

Shortly after the hour fixed on for the landing of the boat, Mr. Lovejoy arose and called me to go with him to see what was the result. The moon had set and it was still dark, but day was near; and here and there a light was glimmering from the window of some sick room, or of some early riser. The streets were empty and silent, and the sounds of our feet echoed from the walls as we passed along. Little did he dream, at that hour, of the contest which the next night would witness: that these same streets would echo with the shouts of an infuriate mob, and be stained with his own heart's blood!

We found the boat there and the press in the warehouse; aided in raising it to the third story. We were all rejoiced that no conflict had ensued, and that the press was safe; and all felt that the crisis was over. We were sure that the store could not be carried by storm by so few men as had ever yet acted in a mob; and though the majority of the citizens would not aid to defend the press we had no fear that they would aid in an attack. So deep

was this feeling that it was thought that a small number was sufficient to guard the press afterward; and it was agreed that the company should be divided into sections of six, and take turns on successive nights. As they had been up all night, Mr. Lovejoy and myself offered to take charge of the press till morning; and they retired.

The morning soon began to dawn; and that morning I shall never forget. Who that has stood on the banks of the mighty stream that then rolled before me can forget the emotions of sublimity that filled his heart, as in imagination he has traced those channels of intercourse opened by it and its branches through the illimitable regions of this western world? I thought of future ages, and of the countless millions that should dwell on this mighty stream; and that nothing but the truth would make them free. Never did I feel as then the value of the right for which we were contending: thoroughly to investigate and fearlessly to proclaim that truth. O, the sublimity of moral power! By it God sways the universe. By it he will make the nations free.

I passed through the scuttle to the roof and ascended to the highest point of the wall. The sky and the river were beginning to glow with approaching day, and the busy hum of business to be heard. I looked with exultation on the scenes below. I felt that a bloodless battle had been gained for God and for the truth; and that Alton was redeemed from eternal shame. And as all around grew brighter with approaching day, I thought of that still brighter sun, even now dawning on the

world, and soon to bathe it with floods of glorious light.

Brother Lovejoy, too, was happy. He did not exult: he was tranquil and composed: but his countenance indicated the state of his mind. It was a calm and tranquil joy, for he trusted in God that the point was gained: that the banner of an unfettered press would soon wave over that mighty stream.

Vain hopes! How soon to be buried in a martyr's grave. Vain! did I say? No: they are not vain. Though dead he still speaketh; and a united world can never silence his voice. Ten thousand presses, had he employed them all, could never have done what the simple tale of his death will do. Up and down the mighty streams of the west his voice will go: it will penetrate the remotest corner of our land: it will be heard to the extremities of the civilized world. From henceforth no boat will pass the spot where he fell, heedless of his name, or of his sentiments, or of the cause for which he died. And if God in his mercy shall use this event to arouse a slumbering nation to maintain the right for which he died, he will look down from the throne of his glory on the scene of his martyrdom and say, It is enough: truth is triumphant: the victory is gained.

We returned to his house, and before my departure we united in prayer. His wife, through weakness, had not risen. In her chamber we met in the last act of worship in which we were to unite on earth. I commended him and his family to the

care of God. As I left her I cheered her with the hope that her days of trial were nearly over and that more tranquil hours were at hand. Cheered by these hopes I bade them and my other friends farewell, and began my journey homeward. On my way I heard passing rumors of a meditated attack on the store; but gave them no weight. The events of a few hours proved them but too well founded.

Of the tragical catastrophe I was not a spectator; but after careful inquiry of eyewitnesses \* I shall proceed to narrate the leading facts.

From the statement of the mayor it seems that an attack was apprehended; and that the matter was laid before the common council, and that they did not deem it necessary to take any action on the subject.

On account of the fatigue and watching of the preceding night, most of the defenders of the press who were in the store the night before were absent; and others took their place. The number was larger than at first intended in consequence of an increased apprehension of an attack. Their apprehensions were realized. An attack was commenced at about ten o'clock at night.

In order to render the narrative more clear it is necessary to say a few words concerning the structure and location of the store. It consisted of two long stone buildings, side by side, in one block, ex-

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\* In addition to the mayor's statement I have chiefly relied on Mr. Gilman and Mr. Weller.

tending from the landing in Water street back to Second street; with doors and windows at each gable end, but with no windows at the sides. Hence it can be defended at the ends from within, but not at the sides. The roofs are of wood. The lots on each side being vacant, these stores form a detached block, accessible on every side.

About ten o'clock a mob, *already armed*, came and formed a line at the end of the store in Water street, and hailed those within. Mr. Gilman opened the end door of the third story, and asked what they wanted. They demanded the press. He, of course, refused to give it up; and earnestly entreated them to use no violence. He told them that the property was committed to his care; and that they should defend it at the risk and sacrifice of their lives. At the same time they had no ill will against them, and should deprecate doing them an injury. One of them, a leading individual among the friends of free inquiry at the late convention, replied, that they would have it at the sacrifice of their lives, and presented a pistol at him: upon which he retired.

They then went to the other end of the store and commenced an attack. They demolished two or three windows with stones and fired two or three guns. As those within threw back the stones, one without was distinctly recognised and seen taking aim at one within: for it was a moonlight evening and persons could be distinctly seen and recognised.

A few guns were then fired by individuals from within, by which Lyman Bishop, one of the mob,

was killed. The story that he was a mere stranger waiting for a boat, and that Mr. Lovejoy shot him, are alike incapable of proof. He was heard during the day by a person in whose employ he was, to express his intention to join the mob.

After this the mob retired for a few moments, and then returned with ladders which they lashed together to make them the proper length, and prepared to set fire to the roof.

About this time the mayor having been informed of the riot, came on to the ground: but having few to sustain him, was unable to compel the rioters to desist by force. They requested him to go into the store, and state to its defenders, that they were determined to have the press; and would not desist until they had accomplished their object; and agreed to suspend operations until his return. Attended by a justice of the peace he entered and delivered the message of the mob.

Suppose now it had been delivered up by its defenders and destroyed. How remarkable the narrative must have been, of a press given up to the mob to be destroyed by the agency of the mayor and a justice of the peace!

However, they did not give it up. Mr. Gilman requested the mayor to call on certain citizens, to see if they could not prevent the destruction of the building. He said he could not: he had used his official authority in vain. He then asked him whether he should continue to defend the property by arms. This the mayor as he had previously done, authorised him to do. The mayor and the

justice were then informed that the press would not be given up: and the decision was by them communicated to the mob. They then proceeded to fire the roof; taking care to keep on the side of the store where they were secure from the fire of those within.

It now became evident to the defenders that their means of defense, so long as they remained within, was cut off; and nothing remained but to attack the assailants without. It was a hazardous step; but they determined to take it. A select number, of whom Mr. Lovejoy was one, undertook the work. They went out at the end, turned the corner, and saw one of the incendiaries on the ladder, and a number standing at the foot. They fired and it is supposed wounded, but did not kill him; and then, after continuing their fire some minutes and dispersing the mob, returned to load their guns. When they went out again no one was near the ladder, the assailants having so secreted themselves as to be able to fire, unseen, on the defenders of the press as they came out. No assailants being in sight Mr. Lovejoy stood, and was looking round. Yet, though he saw no assailant, the eye of his murderer was on him. The object of hatred, deep, malignant and long continued, was fully before him—and the bloody tragedy was consummated. Five balls were lodged in his body, and he soon breathed his last. Yet after his mortal wound he had strength remaining to return to the building and ascend one flight of stairs before he fell and expired. They then attempted to capitulate, but were refused with curses by the mob, who threatened to burn the store and

shoot them as they came out. Mr. Roff now determined at all hazards to go out and make some terms, but he was wounded as soon as he set his foot over the threshold.

The defenders then held a consultation. They were shut up within the building, unable to resist the ferocious mode of attack now adopted, and seemed devoted to destruction. At length Mr. West came to the door, informed them that the building was actually on fire, and urged them to escape by passing down the river bank; saying that he would stand between them and the assailants so that if they fired they must fire on him. This was done. All but two or three marched out and ran down Water street, being fired on by the mob as they went. Two, who were wounded, were left in the building, and one who was not, remained to take care of the body of their murdered brother. The mob then entered, destroyed the press and retired. Among them were seen some of those leading "friends of free inquiry" who had taken an active part in the convention.

Before these tragic scenes were ended, the streets were crowded with spectators. They came out to see the winding up of the plot, but not to aid in repressing violence or maintaining the law. The vote to aid the mayor in suppressing violence they had refused to pass, because it was their duty to aid without it: and here we see how powerful their sense of duty was. The time of the conflict was from one hour and a half to two hours. During

this time the bells were rung, and a general notice given; and yet none came to the rescue. It has been said however, in extenuation of this inactivity that it was owing to a want of concert and arrangement among the citizens, or by the police. No man knew on whom he might call to aid in suppressing the riot; and some who have professed that it was their desire to do so, say that they were hindered by the apprehension that they might be only rallying the mob in the attempt to quell it.

The feelings exhibited by the mob were in keeping with the deed on which they were intent. Oaths, curses, blasphemy and malignant yells, broke upon the silence of the night as they prosecuted their work of death. But even passions so malignant, were not enough to give them the hardihood and recklessness needed for their work. To drench conscience, blind reason, and arouse passion to its highest fury by the intoxicating cup, was needed to fit them for the consummation of their work. The leaders in this business were adepts; they knew what means were adapted to their ends, and used them without stint or treason.

Thus closes a tragedy without parallel in the history of our land. In other popular excitements, there has been an equal amount of feeling: in some blood has been shed. But never was there an avowed effort to overthrow the foundations of human society pushed to such bloody results: and that, on principles adapted so utterly to dissolve the social system, and plunge the nation into anarchy and blood.

## PART II.

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### CHAPTER I.

The leading facts of the case are now before the public. And in view of these facts, one main question arises:—Who are responsible, not merely legally but morally, for such deeds of unparalleled atrocity as have been narrated? On the one hand efforts have been made to throw the responsibility on Mr. Lovejoy; on the convention; on myself; or, on all of us united. On the other hand it is maintained that the responsibility of these transactions rests first of all on the guilty agents; and next on all who excited, instigated or countenanced; or who did not rebuke and oppose them in their guilty deeds.

In order to come to a correct conclusion we must take enlarged views of all the principles involved: and of the series of events taken as a whole; and in all its relations to the existing condition of the christian world.

There are those whose minds are so constantly under the influence of the narrow, limited local interests around them, that the lofty standard of eternal, immutable truth and duty is by them disregarded or unknown. Whose only divinity is wealth or popular applause; and who “with an eastern devotion kneel at the shrine of their idolatry.” To all such I have nothing to say.

But I thank God, all are not such. That our nation as a mass is not utterly fallen and degraded—that a noble host of lofty spirits still remains. I speak of no party, of no locality, of no section of our land. I speak of the redeeming spirit, which I trust in God pervades it all; and the power of which is still felt in every party of every name. No: all are not thus sunk and degraded. Multitudes there are who still can rise above the narrowness of local interests, and party prejudice, and allow their minds to move in the current of the destinies of the human race: who can recognize the sublimity of principle, and with prophetic foresight anticipate the judgment of future ages on great moral questions; who have not yet bowed the knee of idolatry at the shrine of popular favor, or of mammon; who admit that there are higher principles of action than mere political expediency, or the voice of a crowd; who reverence the immutable and eternal principles of right; and believe that there is a law higher than all human laws: and who are not ashamed, with Blackstone, and Grotius, and Vattel, and all the great founders and expounders of national and municipal law, to believe that “this law, being dictated by God himself, is superior in obligation to any other; is binding over over all the globe, in all countries, at all times; and that no human laws are of any validity if contrary to this.”

To all such I appeal. To all who are not ashamed of the spirit of their fathers, who considered true freedom the noblest gift of God; even that freedom which guaranties to every man the full exercise of

the loftiest of human rights—the right fully to know, and fearlessly to proclaim and to do the will of God: the right to regard the opinions of that One as of more weight than the universe besides: and the right to do His will though the public sentiment of millions oppose.

To such I appeal. Such I know there are. Though as a nation we have long been sinking from the lofty ground of principle with which we began; though the cursed love of gold has left to multitudes no standard of right and wrong but dollars and cents; and the thirst for political promotion has left to others no criterion of truth but the opinions of the majority, however profligate; I trust there are some left, who still believe that their souls belong to none but God and the truth: and who by the grace of God are determined to resist, even unto death, the tyranny, which would compel the soul to forego communion with the loftiest spirits of all ages; shut it out from participation in the mightiest movements of the age:—yea, and prohibit it from being a co-worker with God in the execution of his vast designs of renovating a ruined world.

To all such I shall submit the following positions; which, in view of the preceding facts, I shall endeavor to maintain:—

—That the great discussion which gave rise to these transactions is an essential part of the movement of the providence of God in the present age of the world; and that to evade it is impossible; to oppose it, vain.

—That to the manner in which it came up in this state there is no just ground of objection.

—That the first development of mob violence has not even a plausible pretext for its justification: and to palliate it, connive at it, or attempt to justify it, is treason, both against God and man.

—That after the first development of violence, every possible effort was made, in a cool, kind, temperate and judicious way, to arrest its course by plans of conciliation and concession; and by efforts to unite the wise and the good against the lawless and riotous disturbers of the peace.

—That these efforts were defeated by a spirit of intolerance and persecution, that rejected all conciliation or compromise; that excluded all argument; and would be satisfied with nothing but the entire and unconditional surrendry of the noblest rights and privileges of the human mind.

—That all hopes of evading this spirit by retreat was vain; that to retire before it, would but give it new malignity and power; and that there was no alternative but to defeat it there, or, by falling in the contest, compel it to disclose to the civilized world its real nature and its malignant power.

—That in conducting this opposition, our principles were sound and judicious; such as have received the united approbation of the civilized world; and that the efforts made by many to excite odium against them, can be the result of nothing but inexcusable prejudice or malignity.

—That there cannot be, to a candid mind, the slightest reason to question on whom the whole guilt of these transactions rests.

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## CHAPTER II.

In remarking upon these points, it is not at all my design to argue the main question of abolitionism. I shall say nothing on that subject except what is necessary, as a matter of self-defense. But to do this it is essential that we should fully state what we consider the relations of the subject in question to the present age. Otherwise no one can appreciate the motives in view of which we acted; or judge of the propriety or prudence of our course.

Let then the first great question be fairly met.—Is not a full discussion of this subject a part of the plans of God? Does it not belong to the movement of his providence in the present age? Has not his Spirit brought it up? Is not he determined that it shall be discussed and decided? Has he not a right so to determine? Is it not a duty to obey his will? And can it be wise or prudent to attempt to arrest a discussion which he has determined to bring on?

The present age has its characteristics. The course of the providence of God is clear and distinct; the signs of the times are not ambiguous: they may easily be known.

Who can deny, that the tendency of the age is, to make one sublime and simple truth the regulating principle of all human society:—that in the very nature of the human mind, and in the relations of man to God, there is a foundation laid for certain immutable duties and rights; that the relations of the individual to God are higher and more sacred than any other relations; and that, as God has made it the duty of every individual to live for him, so it is the immutable right of every human being to be free to do it?

Who, I say, can deny this? Is it not a notorious fact, that, since the Reformation, the great subjects of the age have been religion and government? And that the central principle of all this discussion has been individual unalienable rights?—rights, not created by human governments; but given by God in the creative act by which he made man a free moral agent, whose highest duty and happiness was to know and do the will of his God.

And why should it not be so? If it is God's purpose to convert the world, what can he do so directly to prepare the way, as to revive in the human mind a deep and full conviction of these rights? They are the very basis of all religion. No man can be converted to God who does not recognize them. That God has on him higher claims than father or mother, or brother or sister, or ruler or people: and that, as it is his duty at all hazards to obey God, so it is his right. In short, that it is the inalienable right of every human being to live for the great end for which God made him; and in accordance with

the laws of the nature which God gave him. Who, I say, can deny that all this is true?

And now, if there is on earth a system of laws, which daily authorizes the violation of every fundamental right of millions of human beings, without protection or redress: which authorises the destruction of all rights of knowledge, of conscience, of marriage and family, of chastity, of property, of reputation and influence, and of protection against personal abuse; and in its own nature tends to render this violation certain: if there be such a system, I ask, is it not in the way of all the designs of God, and of the whole tide and current of his providence in the present age? Especially if placed in the very focal point of illumination for the world, on the great subject of inalienable rights. If the fundamental principles of individual rights, on which our systems are based are not false; or if God does not mean to curse the world by loading them with disgrace; if he does not mean to roll back the wheels of time, and plunge the nations in a second night of ages; can he, will he allow such a system to remain?

But how shall it be removed? This is a great question of moral reformation; and one on which nothing but experience can throw light. Hence he has called up the attention of the world to it; and put in train a vast course of experiments. This has been carried on in all circumstances, and in every variety of condition: and has at last worked out one uniform result. It has disclosed a set of principles, founded, as we think, on nature; and in strict accordance with the laws of the mind and the

dictates of political economy; and which have been tested by experience again and again. They are these:

That to continue such a system of law, in order that under its influence slaves may gradually be prepared for freedom, is ridiculous, hopeless and absurd: for the system has no tendencies but to unfit for freedom, and to degrade.

That to suppose that the continuance of such a system is essential to the safety of the masters, is to assume, in direct violation of the word, and entire disregard of the providence of God, that it is ever more safe to do wrong than to do right. Again,

That to abolish this system at once, and to replace it by a wise and equitable system of legislation, in which the slave shall be restored to his rank and his rights as a man and an immortal being; a system adapted alike to defend the community against vagrancy and idleness, and to enlighten, elevate, employ and protect the emancipated as free laborers, is reasonable, practicable, safe and a duty: and that no man has a right, voluntarily, to keep any human being under such a system of law, under pretence of doing him good, for every such pretext is vain.

Now, it is not my purpose to argue the truth or falsehood of these views. All I affirm is, that the exigencies of the age require that they should be fairly discussed: and that to hold them is no crime. We are bound at least fairly to discuss them according to the immutable principles of eternal right. We are bound solemnly to raise, and prayerfully to discuss the question; Are they not the views of God?

We are not of course to conclude that, if they are the views of God they would not be opposed. Has God never been opposed on earth? Did the fact that Christ taught the pure will of God shield him from persecution and death? But to whom am I speaking? I thought that at least the followers of Christ had not forgotten that God's whole work on earth is to subdue a hostile world: and the fact that any system of opinions is hated by the wicked, the dissolute, the ambitious, the proud, and the avaricious, is strong presumptive evidence that it is of God: and that those professors of religion who take a ground which all such will extol have deep reason to fear that they are even fighting against God. "If ye were of the world the world would love its own, but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you," is the criterion of discipleship given by Christ. How can those professed Christians fail to tremble who carry about them such a damning evidence of hostility to the cause of God, as the applauses of a mob?

But if it should at last prove true, as we are sure it will, that these are the opinions of God; is it imprudent to hold, or to discuss them? What if a corrupt public sentiment does oppose? Is it imprudent to fear God more than man? Is it imprudent to refuse to follow a multitude to do evil? To what deadly results are the habits of the day about to bring us? Is there then no standard of right and wrong but the voice of a mob?

Yet this, the question of all questions, is the only

one which those who bring such multiplied charges of imprudence against us have failed to raise. They think of nothing but popular opinion: outraging public sentiment: and fail to inquire whether this public sentiment is right or wrong? whether it is for God, or against him?

And is it to prevent the discussion of opinions like these, that all the foundations of society must be dissolved: that odium and bitter persecution must be aroused: and rights guarantied by God must be trodden under foot? Take off, take off, I beseech you, the veil of prejudice and look at them once more.

They have been hooted at as a mere theory; they have been derided as chimerical; and their advocates have been subjected to obloquy and contempt, as a mere insignificant fraction of the civilized world; and the very idea of discussing them treated with scorn.

That these views are true, I need not now attempt to prove. It is enough that they are not too palpably absurd to be discussed. And who dares make such an assertion of views like these? Views, which are not a mere theory; but originate from the very nature of the human mind, and from the immutable relations of man to God. Not a chimerical, untried, visionary plan of reformation; but the result of the experience of the civilized world for the last fifty years; which have all been tested by facts; in favor of which all facts testify with united voice—not one against them. The advo-

cates of which, though here a despised minority, are not a small party among the wise and good of the age; but are the vast majority in the civilized world. Views which have not been brought up out of time and place, and against the current of the age; but by the great movements of the human mind, and the irresistible course of the providence of God. Views, too, on which our own institutions are founded.

Now what we ask is, not that any be compelled to believe these opinions; but that the mere fact of believing and exhibiting them be not stigmatized as fanatical, incendiary, treasonable, and deserving of nothing but mobs, outrage and death. Is it possible, that in a country, professing to be free; where the people make all the laws, and can of course repeal them; and where in every constitution the idea of change is not only held out but the mode of making it prescribed, we are to be told that all these invitations to free inquiry are so much solemn mockery? That the character of these laws no man must investigate, although they may involve principles which have aroused the attention of the civilized world; and though the subject is urged on us by the providence of God; and an imperious sense of duty? It is said these views are incendiary. And is this charge to be admitted without discussion, or proof? We deny it: and affirm that they are salutary and tend to safety and peace. And we stand ready to give the proof.

It is said, we have no concern in the system. And is this the mere *ipse dixit* of an interested par-

ty, or of a mob, to settle so grave a point without argument or dispute? We deny it. It affects not only the community where it is; but the whole union and the civilized world: and it exposes the whole nation to the wrath of God. Even Jefferson, who was no fanatic, said: "I tremble for my country, when I remember that God is just."

But it is said, you will produce excitement: what then? Did not Christ produce excitement? Did he not kindle a fire on earth? The question is not, Will men be excited? but, Have they any right to be?

But it is said, you will outrage public sentiment. What then? Did not Christ do the same? What if public sentiment is wrong and opposed to God: are we to hold back the truth lest it be outraged?

The fact is, there is but one possible ground:—adherence to God and the immutable principles of right. And if any man, or any community is offended at this, the fault is their own. This course is wisdom. This course is prudence.

As to the main question, then, there is no doubt: we have the right to discuss this subject; the great movements of the age demand it; and wisdom and prudence enforce the command.

## CHAPTER III.

It is equally obvious that to the manner in which the subject came up in this state, there is no just ground of objection.

How did it come up? Mildly and quietly, and after years of thought. I know it is fashionable to talk of the burning spirit of the abolitionists. And that some have indicated a wrong spirit I do not deny. But it is not true of the movement in this state as a whole, that it has ever exhibited any features except sober and serious thought, and candid, fair and thorough discussion: and no steps of a public nature have ever been taken except after long and prayerful inquiry. And if any one affirms to the contrary I fearlessly challenge him for the proof. No such proof can be found, for there are no facts on which to base it.

The first developments of mob violence, too, have not even a plausible pretext for their justification: and to palliate, connive at, or attempt to justify them, is treason against God and against man.

Let us look at the facts of the case. A religious paper is established at St. Louis. Does its editor advocate the odious doctrines of the abolitionists? No. Yet still he encounters the vengeance of the mob. Why? Because he dared to remonstrate against the profanation of the Sabbath, and of his nation's flag for purposes of religious bigotry:

Because he dared to remonstrate against the lawless proceedings of a mob, who burnt alive a fellow man, without trial, judge, or jury. Because he indignantly rebuked the anarchical doctrines of a lawless judge who declared the power of the mob to be above the power of the law. And because, though no abolitionist, he dared even to maintain that slavery was a great, moral evil, and ought as soon as possible to be removed.

He came to this state, his paper was re-established, and he at first supposed that he would not be called on to oppose slavery as he had, and so said, but made no pledge to be silent; nay, expressly stated that he would not be bound.

At length, by the progress of his own mind, and of events, he is convinced that it is his duty to speak, and he does it. Again, many in the state wish to organize themselves into a society for discussion and for moral influence, and consult him. He for a time puts them off; and at last, in compliance with their wishes, proposes the inquiry,—Is it best so to organize? and asks for the opinions of friends.

And here violence begins. He is first falsely accused of violating a pledge, and then told that it is the will of a majority that he forbear to print. An editor of a neighboring city in a slave state applauds the spirit of the meeting, tells them that Mr. Lovejoy "has forfeited all claims on that or any other community," exhorts them "to eject from among them that minister of mischief, the Observer, or to correct its course;" and threatens them with the loss

of trade unless they "put a stop to the efforts of these fanatics, or expel them from their community."

In the meeting no charges are made of an imprudent use of language, or of a bad spirit. The simple head and front of his offending is, that he holds certain opinions which the majority of the community do not like; and which they proclaim to be subversive of the interests of the place!

And is a freeman to submit to such atrocious tyranny as this? Are the rights of conscience nothing? Is duty to God nothing? Are sacred chartered privileges nothing? Is a foreign editor, without trial, judge or jury, to proclaim a citizen of our state an outlaw, to say that all the bonds which once bound him to civil society are dissolved, and to point him out to the mob as deserving of nothing but wrath, unless he will at their dictation resign the dearest rights of the human soul? Is there no God? Are there no immutable principles of right? Is there no law, no justice, no fear of God? Have we no ruler but the demon of anarchy; and no Lord but that bloody, thousand headed, murderous tyrant, the mob?

Had it been under Nero, Mr. Lovejoy might reasonably have fled. That bloody tyrant made no pretensions to reason, or to the fear of God. But has a christian nation sunk so low that in the midst of laws, charters, and most sacred guaranties, made for the express purpose of defending the rights of speech; and to be maintained and administered by christian men; they will require a citizen, at the bidding of an infuriate mob, to sacrifice conscience,

abandon every right, and seek for safety in inglorious flight? And yet, because Mr. Lovejoy refused to do this he is stigmatized as stubborn, dogmatical, rash and imprudent: and we are gravely told that he deserves no sympathy; and that on him the guilt of those atrocious deeds must rest, which have infixed so indelible a stain on the American name!

If indeed it is so, it is time for us to know it, and cease our boastings of freedom and equal rights. Even the inquisition itself was never guilty of deeds so atrocious. It gave to its miserable victims at least the forms of justice and a trial. Nor did it ever claim the power of rising superior to law. But in a christian land even the show of justice is laid aside; and an innocent man, a man guilty of no crime or misdemeanor, a man who had done nothing to justify even the least excitement; is stripped at a blow of every right; all ties that bind him to the community are cut;—and that solely because he will not bow the knee to the irresponsible censorship of a profligate mob.

Had Mr. Lovejoy been intemperate in his use of language it would not have furnished the slightest excuse for such proceedings. But he was not. Even this poor pretext is wanting. At the time of the meeting it was not even claimed. I know it has since been got up by some eastern editors, who in all probability never read his paper. But it will not do. His exposition of views put forth to meet this crisis is marked by nothing so much as a calm, temperate, kind and dignified style. It indicates the spirit of a man unwilling to provoke, and anxious

only to convince. And he even watched over his language on this subject with solicitous care. And I fearlessly say, that, from one article on slavery in the journal of the Colonization society, which I have now in my eye, I can select more severity of language on the subject of slavery than from all Mr. Lovejoy ever wrote.

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#### CHAPTER IV.

Again: when we saw the evil coming on we did all in our power to unite good men, allay excitement, and restore law.

It was my deep sense of the need of such an effort, which induced me to give my name to the call. It was then my plan, not to press the formation of a state society at the expense of division and mobs, but as this was the original cause of the excitement—for no man who has noticed facts can doubt it—to concede this point, and demand only a kind, friendly, uncommitted discussion; and a society of inquiry, if any organization was thought best. I urged on Br. Lovejoy and his friends, that from a regard to the public peace they would yield their private feelings and plans. And what was Br. Lovejoy's reply? You will not find me obstinate. For union and peace, I will give up any thing but duty. And so said his friends. What more could they do?

I then explained to a number of the leading citi-

zens of Alton, the dangers of division among good men; and intreated them to unite, not in forming an anti-slavery society, but in a friendly discussion: and pointed out a way in which, without any committal, they might modify the course of their brethren and avoid a mob. And when they approved these views I made the result public, and invited the friends of unity among the good, and of free inquiry to attend the approaching meeting. And what more could be done?

Now in this very critical aspect of affairs; after one mob had taken place and when another was threatened, it did seem to me that it would be cruel in the extreme, directly or indirectly to add fuel to the fire which I was striving to quench. Public odium was already burning fearfully against a small and hated minority; and how could any one take this very hour to add fresh intensity to the flame? Why not at least let the trial be made unimpeded by new accessions of odium and hostility.

And now, although I am willing to acquit the leaders of the colonization society of all deliberate malignity of purpose; and though the majority of those who joined it, I am sure, did not anticipate its results; yet no charity requires me to forbear to narrate what was actually done, or to delineate its effects.

In the first place it seemed to be got up expressly to defeat the convention.

In the second place it held out fully and prominently the idea that no plan of proceeding was rational or safe, but the one proposed by itself.

Again: it passed a resolution designed to operate directly against the convention about to be held, and adapted to render it odious, by insinuations and innuendoes; as if it were to be composed of men who were accustomed to use unchristian and abusive epithets against the slaveholding community, and to assume that they were the only friends of the slave or of his emancipation.

Again: the same clergyman and editor, by whom this resolution was introduced, in his account of the meeting takes it for granted that the meeting of the colonization society has rendered abortive all the plans of the friends of the convention, and remarks concerning them, "Doubtless a very few restless spirits will be disappointed, vexed, mortified, and may struggle for a time to enjoy notoriety." Now all this as individuals we could easily bear. It is little to be called restless spirits; disappointed, vexed, mortified, and striving for a brief notoriety. Though even if we had been such, and had been defeated too, it is worthy neither of a man nor a christian, much less of a minister of Christ, thus to exult over our anticipated fall.

But in this light I do not view it. I regard not at all its influence on personal feeling; but its manifest tendencies at once to defeat all plans of conciliation or union, and all efforts to allay excitement, or to tranquillize the public mind; and to arouse to new intensity the fury of the mob.

Of whom was such language used? Of men obstinate and perverse, despising union and intent solely on arousing and inflaming the public mind?

No: but of men who had gone to the uttermost limit of concession, and whose only demand was that they should not be compelled to give up every plan without deliberation or discussion—at the bidding of a mob. Could not the editor of a religious paper, a professed minister of Christ, find any kinder language than this for such men? And could he calmly devise measures and plans, the only tendency of which was to shut them out from the sympathy of the good and expose them to the fury of the mob? And if such language ought ever to be used, was this the time and the place? Well do I remember the emotions which filled my heart as first this language met my eye. It came at that very crisis when first I felt that it was fearfully probable that we were soon to be called to wrestle with the fury of a mob. And he who has never been called to pass through such a scene can never know what it is to be thus assailed in such an hour by a professed minister of his Savior and his God.

I am willing to make all possible allowances. Nor will I say that these good men wished to excite a mob. But I must say, that if they had wished it they could not have used means more adapted to produce the result. And if they did not see the direct tendency of measures like these, some strange delusion had blinded their eyes.

At all events the results were sure. The majority of good men stood aloof, and left the convention a mark for its foes. What friends of free inquiry came in; the spirit they displayed, and the course which they pursued, we have seen. How all discussion was

nipped in the bud; and how, when we retired to a private house to escape the storm, it pursued us still, we have also seen. And we have seen too, how this same editor, afterwards, gave such proceedings no rebuke, but regarded them alike creditable to the place, and promotive of the general good.

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## CHAPTER V:

THE true spirit of intolerance now stood exposed. Events were so ordered by the providence of God as to strip off every disguise. It now became plain that all attempts to conciliate and to discuss were vain: and nothing remained but to resist or to submit.

I am aware that even pride or resentment might dictate resistance to such demands as were made on us; and had these been our motives the act had deserved no praise. But though sinful passions might prompt to such a course, their entire absence would not lead to the reverse. Indeed, the more we reflected on our duties to God and the truth, and the more we considered the principles involved, the more did we feel that we could not retreat. We felt that a crisis had come, and in Mr. Lovejoy's view there was but the alternative—to conquer or to die. He had deliberately looked the matter through; and was willing either to triumph, should

God permit, or to die; that the real nature of the malignant influences now at work might be fully disclosed, and the nation at last be aroused. And after solemn deliberation, and much consultation and prayer, he took his ground to remain.

But it was of no use to remain without a press; and ruin to import presses and not defend them. For there was a moral certainty that presses to any number would be destroyed if no effort was made to protect them. And how could this be done? Was it not by endeavoring to arouse the citizens to sustain the laws? Had all been aroused to the effort our end would have been at once secured. But all were not; a part were willing to act and a part were not. Still the law and civil power were not turned against us: Under them we could act.

And the question was twofold. 1. Can we with this force maintain our ground? 2. If we fail what will be the result? As to the first they thought they could. If not it would arouse the nation, and test the principles of the case. Now all that was done was the carrying out of this plan: and if you find fault with the execution, you find fault with the plan.

It is objected to on these grounds.

1. That all defense of law by arms is wrong.
2. That the defense was part of a system of efforts to propagate the truth: and was therefore propagating the truth by carnal weapons.
3. That a clergyman aided to make it.

As to the first I can only say, that so long as man is in the body, physical force must be used to

secure moral results. God always has used it, and always will. And all physical laws causing death if they are violated are laws made by God: and sanctioned by the penalty of death to secure their observance. And it is the fear of this penalty that deters men from their violation. That in the gospel he has authorized the maintenance of law by the sword, an instrument of death; and that no laws not sustained by this ultimate resort can have any binding power.

Nor is it rendering "evil for evil" in the sense forbidden by Christ to punish with death the man who aims to prostrate human law, any more than it is rendering "evil for evil" for God to punish a sinner for violating the laws of the universe. Nor is it true that no punishments are right but those which seek the sinner's good. Does God punish sinners forever for their own good; or to "set them forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire," as he affirms.

The main design of punishment obviously is to deter from transgression. The certainty of an ultimate appeal to force is all that gives law any terrors to the wicked. The good may be a law unto themselves; but as we are told by Paul, the law is not made for such, but for murderers and thieves and all who can be restrained by no higher motive than fear. In Alton all such fear had been nearly taken away. Had it been restored; had the conviction been deeply fixed that the large mass of the community would sustain the law by force; a small band of wicked men would never have dar-

ed to make the attack. It was the report of the committee, and the resolutions of the meeting of citizens which took this fear away and emboldened the wicked in their deeds of violence and blood.

As to the fact that the defense was of a press—a part of a system of means for diffusing truth—it may be replied, that in all well organized christian communities, this principle is involved: and all arguments against it are deduced from a consideration of expediency or duty under an entirely different state of society. For example: An itinerant missionary, like the apostles under the persecuting Roman power, might be under obligations not to use force, but to flee from city to city when persecuted. Force could do no good: it was hopeless against the power of an empire. But for a man so situated it was best to have no wife, nor house, nor printing press, nor any other ties to fasten him to any spot. Again: An itinerant in a nominally christian community, yet a community thoroughly degraded and corrupt, and refusing to enforce law, might be under obligation to pursue the same course; because force would be useless; and he could do nothing but flee from place to place, and preach as he went.

But suppose now a minister is settled in a regular, well organized Christian community, the vast majority of which are decided friends of Christianity, and supporters of law. Now if fifty or a hundred men out of thousands, excited to rage by some unwholesome truth, attempt to tear down his meeting house,—is no resistance to be made? Or, if his

person is assailed; shall he seek no defense from law, but flee? Or allow himself to be abused or slain?

Now suppose a body of men unite to disseminate the truth by means of missionaries, or bibles, or tracts; and erect buildings and buy presses. If these are assailed shall they not apply to the magistrate and seek the protection of the law? And, if needed, shall not force be used? And yet these are parts of a system the direct end of which is to disseminate the truth. The fact is, that in the best states of society investments of capital in means of moral influence increase solely because they are protected by law; and when the law ceases to protect, or opposes them, they cease to exist. And if we lay down the principle that the means of exerting moral influence are not to be defended by force of arms, because they are devoted to the high purposes of disseminating the truth, where shall we land? Stores and ships if used for making money may be protected; but if used for higher and nobler ends, not. And all presses, houses, churches, academies, or schools, which are used for high moral and religious ends, must be given up to the fury of a mob.

The fact is, the idea that defending the means of exerting moral influence, or the persons of those who use them, is making use of carnal weapons to propagate the truth, is an entire delusion. If it were so, then every minister in the land is propagating the truth by carnal weapons. Are not all ministers defended by the law? And does not this rest ultimately on an appeal to force or arms if it is invaded.

What matters it whether the necessity of using them occurs every day or not, if it is known that they will be used whenever needed? The fact is, that protecting a man when he is preaching is not propagating truth by carnal weapons: it only enables him to state the truth in safety. It compels no one to believe him. So, defending a press or an editor only enables him to print in safety: it compels no one to read, or to believe. Did we attempt to compel men to believe at the point of the bayonet, that would be using carnal weapons to propagate truth. But who has done this?

Now, that all printing presses are under the protection of law, has been heretofore considered the settled order of things in this state. Hence it was not a duty to leave Alton until it was settled that this is not the fact there. And we resolved to do all in our power to prevent this result from being established. But, if we failed, we intended so to fail that the atrocity of such a state of things should be clearly seen. We did not mean to give room to the inhabitants of Alton thereafter, when writhing under the lashings of public sentiment for having driven away a free press, and smothered free discussion, to say to us, "You have stained the character of the city by your premature flight: the threats of an insignificant band of ruffians frightened you: if you had staid we would have protected you." We did not mean to slip off, and go to another spot, and have the same scenes acted over. This would but have extended the sphere of corruption and enlisted more and more on the side of anarchy. The

only true policy was to test the question there; and see if the law would give way; and if so, then to see if there is in our land moral energy enough to react. We looked upon it as a test question for our whole land; and so indeed it was. Deadly influences were at work; anarchical principles were eating out the very life of the body politic; and yet the nation was asleep: and nothing but an earthquake shock could arouse her to life.

Now granting the soundness of these views;—and that they are sound who can deny?—what was, in few words, the great end of our enterprise? It was either by victory to restore law to its power; or by death to disclose the astounding fact that, in one portion of our land the reign of law was over, and that of anarchy had begun. In full faith that God would use this event to arouse and to save the nation, slumbering on the brink of ruin, and thus produce the effect of which the National Intelligencer justly says: “It would be some consolation to humanity if we could safely count upon the effects thus anticipated, that the time had now come when the majesty of the laws is to be asserted; and when men may travel, speak and write in the United States, without coming under other surveillance than that legally provided;” we took our stand.

Now if the result is, through the blessing of God, the final restoration of a sound public sentiment on the great scale, law will reign again, even in Alton; and no more force will be needed. According to these views a sound public sentiment in the majority is essential to make the exercise of force useful

in restraining a vicious and disorderly minority. But when the majority is unsound, law can no longer be sustained: and to use force on the small scale is vain, if in the body politic, as a whole, there is no restorative power. In such a case I would make no effort at defense; but after the example of the apostles flee before the storm.

It was not, then, a contest for abolition, but for law and human society, against anarchy and misrule. Now if Br. Lovejoy was willing in such a contest to die; if with enlarged and far reaching views he had calculated all these results—and that he had I well know—was it recklessness, was it obstinacy, that urged him on, or a noble devotedness to the cause of God and man?

But he was a clergyman, it is said. So indeed he was. But he was a citizen none the less for that: and as a citizen he had rights and duties too. And is it, at this late day, to be laid down as a rule, that for doing his duty in defending his rights as a citizen he is to forfeit his character as a minister of Christ?

But it is said, he died with murderous weapons in his hands, and with the blood of a fellow being on them. The whole is false. He died in defense of justice, and of the law, and of right: and with the instrument of justice in his hands. Is it so, indeed? When the ruler by the command of God bears the sword, has he a murderous weapon in his hand? And if he executes a criminal, is the blood of a fellow creature on his hands? Who are they

that use such language as this? The men who are in favor of chaplains on board of our ships of war, and in our armies. The men who eulogize Ashmun, a clergyman too, who under the auspices of a benevolent society, gave orders to fire charge after charge of grape shot among dense masses of his fellow men. The men who eulogize with never ending pæans of praise the heroes of Bunker Hill, of Yorktown, of New Orleans. And is it said that these men acted in self-defense, and in defense of inalienable rights? And did not Lovejoy, too? Is it said, perhaps Ashmun did not fire the cannon himself? How much better is it to plan a battle and inspire his soldiers to the contest than to fire himself? Do not all lawyers know that "*qui facit per alium, facit per se*?" And how much better was it for clergymen in sermons and prayers, and by their presence, to urge our fathers on than to fight themselves? In point of morality there is not a shade of difference, and all know there is none in law.

There are men among us who are consistent. Men at whose heresies the very persons who use this cant have been sorely alarmed. Men who are stigmatized as "peace men" and "no human government men." At the heresies of such they have filled the land with clamor. And what now? Have they come over to their opinions, after all this outcry? Then why not strike their colors? Why keep on fighting? At one hour they stigmatize their views as false and pernicious; and the very next what do we see?—There are men, who discard all these heresies, and maintain that human

governments ought to exist, and to be defended by the sword; and maintain the rights of self-defense; and they actually go so far as to reduce their principles to practice: and all at once, smit with pious horror, they start back at the tragedy, and talk of murderous weapons and the blood of a fellow man! Consistent men! Well may we say of such, "where unto shall I liken the men of this generation?"

The fact is, that the prejudices of some against certain opinions are so inveterate as to blind them even to the simplest truths. And such is their zeal to censure the defenders of a hated cause, that they pour upon them volley after volley, as if utterly unconscious that to reach them they must first batter down every intrenchment of their own.

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## CHAPTER VI.

BUT it is said the majority of the citizens of Alton did not wish the press located there. What then? Have a majority a right to drive out a minority if they happen in the exercise of inalienable rights to do what they do not like: and if they will not go, murder them? And is it every editor's duty to give up all his civil rights at the voice of the majority, and flee?

But this is not all. It is not a mere question of an editor's rights. All parties in the state have a right to the advantages of prominent commercial

points. If any place is in a center of communication, like Alton, it is the best location for a paper; and any set of men in the state have a right, if they wish, to establish a paper there. Had it been a political paper in which citizens all over the state were interested, what would have been said of an effort to drive it away because the majority of Alton were opposed to its views?

But it is said "that it was injurious to the interests of the place to have it there. This allegation is both false and absurd. If its views were false it was easy to answer them; but if true, can it be injurious to know the truth? It is said, it would injure the character and trade of the place. Is it then injurious to any place to be known as the decided friend of free inquiry and the fearless protector of the rights of speech? Even if it had caused a loss of dollars and cents; is money the chief good and the loss of it the greatest of all evils? Is not an elevated character for morality, intelligence, good order and religion worth more than untold sums of silver and gold? But how delusive the idea that such a character could injure the commercial interests of Alton. No! it was because I loved Alton, and could not bear to see her fair fame blasted that I exerted myself to secure the restoration of law to the last. To have left Alton at the bidding of a mob could never have restored her lost character. This nothing but the entire restoration and inflexible maintenance of the law could do.

But it is said, your efforts only made the matter worse. So, too, the efforts of Christ did but make

the last state of the Jews worse than the first: but general principles and a regard to the great whole urged him on. So, too, we felt that it was a question of principles; and the voice of the nation was with us, and a regard to the general good urged us on. Besides: who could know that our efforts would be vain? We believed, and on what seemed to us satisfactory grounds, that they would not be vain. Moreover such a thing had never happened in our nation, as an entire prostration of the right of free discussion by a mob: and we did not, and could not believe that it would take place there. We acted according to the evidence we had; and who could demand any thing more. Duties are ours—results belong to God.

On whom then does the guilt of these transactions fall?—First, on the guilty agents: and next, on all who excited, instigated or countenanced them in their deeds. All who have aided to stigmatize with unjust reproach an innocent, meritorious and suffering portion of their fellow citizens. Profligate editors, at the east and at the west, have a large account to render to God for these bloody deeds. All professedly religious men who have by rendering their fellow citizens odious in the eyes of an infuriated mob, stimulated their hatred and urged them on. All who have refused to fear God more than man; and who, through fear of popular odium, have failed to oppose and rebuke the workers of iniquity. All who have allowed their prejudices against unpopular sentiments to render them trait-

orous to the great principles of human society and to the holy cause of God.

Who these are I shall not now particularize. I refer to the simple record of the past and leave it to a candid public to judge.

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## CHAPTER VII.

So much has seemed due to the cause of truth, and to the character of those who endeavored to maintain the cause of freedom against the violence of the mob. But a more particular tribute is due to him who has sealed with his blood his testimony to this sacred cause. To give an extended analysis of his character is not my design. That work is already assigned to other hands. My purpose is simply to state such facts as I know, and as have a particular relation to his connection with the cause for which he died. A letter from one who has been supposed to be an intimate friend of the family, and who was, in fact, a brother minister, has caused me deep regret. The supposition that the author was intimately acquainted with Mr. Lovejoy is entirely incorrect. He had been but a short time a resident at Alton, and his intercourse with Mr. Lovejoy very limited. I was at Alton nearly the whole time during which he had any opportunity to see him and spent a large portion of my time at his house. And I can truly say that the statements of

his letter are entirely unlike any thing I ever saw in Br. Lovejoy, then or at any other time.\* :

That he was a man of strong feelings I know, but I never saw him when he did not have them under complete control. And I have known him intimately in the scenes of his deepest trial. I saw him during his troubles in St. Louis; and spent some days in his family. And during his persecutions in this state I have been with him in circumstances which put every grace of the christian character to the proof. And the uniform result has been that his trials have but rendered his christian spirit the more apparent. Never did I hear him, even in his most unguarded hours utter an angry, an impatient, a vindictive word. And if, as some have said, this was his natural temper, never have I seen such a temper so thoroughly chastened and controlled by the spirit of God. I have argued with him for hours and heard him argue with others on subjects in which he felt deep and intense interest; and yet I never knew him to lose the mastery of his spirit. All was kind and calm. Indeed from the time of the commencement of his trials at St. Louis until his death, he seemed to take a new stand as a devoted and spiritual christian; and daily to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Especially was this true towards the close of his life.

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\* Since the above was written, the writer of that letter has spontaneously given to the public an explanation which at once exonerates himself from all just censure, and destroys the foundation on which certain editors have erected their batteries against the reputation of Mr. Lovejoy.

During the days which he spent at my house a few weeks before his death, we were all struck with his uncommonly mild, gentle, tender and lovely frame of mind. In the deliberations held at that time the same traits strikingly appeared.

He has been charged with obstinacy. That he was firm I grant; but it was the firmness of principle and not of passion or of will. I have had occasion to try to modify his plans; and never did I find a man more open to conviction or influence. He truly and ardently loved the cause of God, and desired the unity of his people; and all appeals derived from this quarter found in his mind a ready response. By such appeals his whole soul was swayed. But that he was not easily moved by motives of a lower order to deviate from the decisions of duty I readily admit. He was a single hearted man. He lived solely for God and the public good. And hence that which is terrific to groveling minds had no power over his. He did not live for honor or for gold, nor for the pleasures of life. Hence he regarded without fear the threats of shame and loss and death, with which his enemies sought to shake the purpose of his soul.

Such loftiness of character they could not understand: to them it was dogged stubbornness. But he was content to walk in the steps of him "who for the joy set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is now set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

His social affections were strong and tender.—

Never did I know a man who had so keen a relish for the joys of home. His inexpressible love for his son, now an orphan, I shall never forget. It seemed to open a channel for the full tide of a father's emotions, quickened perhaps even then by the thought that soon he might be deprived of a father's care.

His intellectual character is best learned from his works. As a writer he was clear, vigorous and precise in the maintenance of the great principles of right: and in the exposure of error or the rebuke of vice he spoke with tremendous power. Whilst a political editor in Missouri he had no superior; and even his enemies paid an involuntary tribute to his intellectual power.

His mind whilst editor of the Observer, as has already been remarked, passed through a revolution of sentiment on a great moral question, and this, of necessity caused the subject to become one of intense interest to him. How could it be otherwise? especially as he was made to pay the penalty for daring to think as a man and a Christian, every step that he took. But his mind was not the subject of morbid excitement. He did not lose his interest in all other truth; though, as was natural, he laid out the largest share of his energy where most needed.

In speech and in writing he was perfectly frank. He used no concealment or reserve. In certain states of society, or certain employments this would be recognized by all as an excellency. But he was a moral censor and a reprover of vice. Hence it caused him to be feared. And yet he never spoke

in malice or revenge. Whatever he saw or felt he saw clearly and felt deeply and uttered freely, fully and without reserve. Nor did he always see how deep his words would cut, nor all the points they would strike.

If this is an intellectual defect it was not caused by a malignant heart, nor is it the defect of a narrow soul. It is rather the overaction of that fullness of a generous soul the power of whose emotions is such as to bear it away: nor can we be surprised if energy so great as his was not always regulated with the calm reserve of an unimpassioned soul.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

But to decide on the guilt or innocence of the actors in this scene is of small moment, unless we can discover the bitter root from whence these evils sprung. By some this is supposed to be a deep and rapidly increasing national degeneracy; an increased disproportion between the sound and unsound elements in the body politic.

That our nation contains within itself a fearful amount of corruption cannot be denied. But that there is any such recent and disproportionate increase of it as to account for the frequent occurrence of such riots as have of late disgraced us in the eyes of the world I cannot believe. The true

reason, as it seems to me, is this; a division among good men on a question adapted to test the power of our institutions to the uttermost. It is not because our institutions have not great power—power enough to resist almost any common assault. But the power by which they are now assailed is no common power. It is one of fearful and tremendous energy. And as if this were not enough, at the very hour when the united energies of all their friends are needed to sustain them; there is a portentous division among the best portions of the community. Those who on all great moral questions have been wont to stand shoulder to shoulder are now found in opposing ranks, and good men speak of good men with a bitterness and contempt that tends to ruin their influence and utterly to neutralize their moral power over the intellect and conscience of the community. Let us look at the facts of the case.

The convictions of our community as it regards the right of free inquiry are deep and general. In nothing as a nation have we gloried more. And it would have seemed an utter impossibility a few years ago, that any one, even the most degraded, should think of calling in question this right. And had any foreigner hinted that the time would come when, in any part of this nation, a great moral question could not be fearlessly discussed, much more that the free range of the intellect was to be limited and the tongue to be palsied by the terrors of death, he would have been spurned from our

shores as a base slanderer of "the land of the free and the home of the brave."

Alas, it is now no dream of the imagination: it is no slander of a foreign tongue. It is but too faithful a record of the present and the past, chronicled on the undying scroll of history in letters of crimson gore. The voice of blood that goes up to heaven from the grave of the murdered Lovejoy, the united clamors of a guilty nation can never drown. Like the thunder of the Almighty it arouses the nations, and proclaims our infamy from shore to shore.

And how has a reverse so astounding taken place in so short a time? Listen: the record is brief and simple.

In the very foundation of our nation, an element was allowed to remain that will not endure free discussion. And the enlightened public sentiment of the world, under the guidance of the spirit of God, is calling on the nation to look this matter directly in the face: to view the system in the light of eternal and immutable truth, and all that will not endure this scrutiny at once to remove. It demands nothing but the right fully to discuss the subject, and to present the only true, philosophical, efficient and safe remedy for the evil. The object is not to compel but to convince. Not to interfere with the legal rights of any one; but to induce those who have the power of legislation to use it aright.

Now though this requisition comes in collision with interest, passion and prejudice of incalculable strength; yet, so deep is the conviction of our

nation of the sacredness of the rights of free inquiry, so deeply is this feeling rooted in the elements of her existence, that if the intelligent and the good were but firmly united in their purpose to maintain the right, no power on earth could overthrow it. And even now, if it is overthrown it will be in the midst of tremendous convulsions and agonies and wailings of despair, as when a nation dies.

But alas for our nation, at the very hour when this discussion arose a cloud of error and prejudice, deep and dense, had settled on the land. The eyes of the good were turned entirely away from those simple principles of truth on which alone the peaceful remedy of the evil depends, to visionary schemes of remedy which guide to bewilder and lead to betray. And when the true principles were proclaimed they came not from the leading heads of influence in the land; and were attended with errors or defects of spirit. And the Christian community instead of receiving the truth on its own evidence, and endeavoring by a kind influence to remove the errors or imperfections; to a very great extent treated the whole with ridicule, bitterness and scorn.

If it is said that violent attacks were made by them on a leading benevolent society; I reply, it was not until leading members of that society had bitterly attacked them; and the war, even if censurable in spirit, was but a war of self-defense. They found themselves and all their plans assailed by a society embodying a large portion of the wealth and intellect of the Christian community. More-

over, the obligations to magnanimity, generosity and self-control always rest with greater force on a majority than on a small minority. And if they regarded this minority as weak, deluded and fanatical men, still, they were as a body, simple hearted Christians, aiming in their own judgment at an object of infinite moment: and scorn and contempt had no tendencies to enlighten their minds or enlarge their views. If this vast majority were strong, they ought surely to have borne with the infirmities of the weak; and not to please themselves.

But what shall we say, if it shall turn out to be the fact that these despised men were in possession of the truth; and that it was in the main, zeal for important truth, clearly seen and deeply felt, that urged them on? Even this is no apology for a bad spirit, wherever or whenever shown. But if it is true, that there was bad spirit on both sides, and the only difference is this, that on one side was zeal for the truth, marred indeed by imperfections; and on the other side an equally defective zeal against the truth; on which side does the balance of merit lie?

This is said on the supposition that the spirit of each side was equally censurable. But when I remember how much has been set down as said in a bad spirit, simply because it was an energetic declaration of truth in advance of the blinded minds of the hearers; and which for that reason seemed to them the ravings of fanaticism, though a purer age will pronounce it the simple truth, even as we all, now, admit that the slave-trade is piracy, though

when first attacked it was deemed the highest of fanaticism to say so—when I remember this, I am constrained to say that many of the leading opponents of the abolitionists have manifested more of a bad spirit than those whom they have opposed; and in circumstances admitting far less excuse. It has been indeed of a different kind, and far less liable to attract the notice and incur the censure of a degenerate age. It has been the lofty, refined and contemptuous bad spirit of the majority of the educated, intelligent, wealthy and christian community, who scarcely deemed the fanatical minority whom they despised, as worthy of notice, except in some exquisitely polished sneer.

But the withering influence of such a public sentiment on its hapless victims who does not know? If its power were equal to its malignity it would scathe them like the lightning of heaven. No element of fanaticism is so pungent as this. There is more condensed venom in a few words of refined and pointed scorn, uttered by some intelligent statesman or divine, than in whole volumes of vulgar abuse. Nothing is so malignant in its influence: nothing so hard to elude or to resist.

Now, when all this withering influence is directed against a class of men whom a corrupt portion of the community are predisposed to regard with deadly hatred merely as pious men; and against whom the odium of a work of reform which touched the very vitals of the nation, was rolling deep and strong; what earthly power can withstand the shock?

No laws, no charters, no constitutions, no sacred guaranties of rights can long withstand an attack so tremendous. On no point were the feelings of our nation so deep, so undivided, as on the sacred right of a free press. It was regarded, and that justly, too, as the vital and essential principle of our nation's life : the very heart from which the bounding tides of a nation's life blood flow. But against this has the attack been made : and though with death-like struggles on the part of its brave defenders, the enemies of liberty have won the day. The citadel of freedom has been stormed; the palladium of a nation's safety seized and destroyed; and the blood of one of its noblest defenders poured upon the ground—whilst the fiends of hell held high carnival around the gory altar of the demon of misrule.

‡ And could this guilty triumph have been gained had it not been for the divisions among the good ? No, never. Had they been united, they had a vantage ground in the deep feelings of a nation's heart from which no earthly power could have driven them: and it was not until they divided and turned their hands against each other that the mournful consummation could be achieved.

It is not because there is less moral power in Alton than in any other place in this state, that it has become the theatre of a tragedy so bloody. In truth, there was no place within the state which for its moral worth was more highly regarded: and this opinion was just. And had the good remained united, this tragedy had never occurred. There was moral power enough in Alton, twice told, to

have repressed all outbreking violence of any mob, had it but been united. But in a large portion of intelligent men, and even professed Christians, there was a bitterness against those who were already the objects of popular odium, which they took no pains to conceal. Yea, many of them took special pains to make it known. And the full power of this feeling I had occasion to know.— From the moment that insinuations and charges tending to fill the public mind with suspicion and odium were proclaimed abroad by ministers and leading men, all efforts to maintain our rights were vain. The wicked felt that there was no power to restrain them; and the tide of violence became deep and strong.

Nor was it from Alton alone that this deadly influence of good men originated. Alton did but sympathise with a more extended circle of feeling in all parts of our land; and though I would by no means apologize for the sins of any of our citizens; I will say, that the result at Alton was but the development of influences which set in upon her like a tide from every portion of our land. And if God shall put the cup of his wrath into the hand of every man who deserves to drink it, what multitudes will be found in every portion of our land who may not escape a fearful retribution !

## CHAPTER IX.

The essential criminality of that division from which such results flow; and of the feelings of contempt, prejudice, or hostility which it has produced; may still more clearly be evinced by its power in blinding the mind to the great principles of truth as involved in the right of free inquiry, and the duty of maintaining the laws at all hazards. Who in a truly christian and benevolent state of mind could ever have promulgated such miserable subterfuges to evade the claims of their fellow citizens to the rights of speech and of protection by law, as have lately been put forth—to the amazement of all reflecting men? That the right to speak or print is not to be exercised in any case where it would outrage the feelings of the community. As if the will of a majority were the criterion of right and wrong: or, as if in no case duty to God could require any man to go against the will or feelings of a sinful world.

So, too, we are told that the men who give occasion to mobs are as much to be dreaded as those who make them: as if it were an assumed principle that no one in doing the will of God could ever give occasion to a mob.

Is it not amazing that the promulgators of such sentiments do not remember that they only embolden the wicked to make mobs? All know that when the wicked outrage the moral feelings of the

good ever so grossly, it makes no mobs. Atheism, infidelity and lewdness may go out with unblushing front to corrupt the community; and no mob is raised against them: for good men have too much conscience to raise mobs. But the moment a good man attempts an unpopular reformation of gross abuses he is mobbed: and a large circle of christians say, the mob is wrong to be sure, but he deserves no sympathy, he was so rash and imprudent.

And is it the prevailing error of good men to oppose evil too boldly; and continually to outrage the sinful feelings of an evil world? And is it true that if christians were united the imprudences of the few who are over-zealous could do so much to excite mobs and prostrate law that they could not easily control its influence? And can any thing render mobs so sure as for a large portion of professed christians to censure a zealous minority of reformers as the guilty causes of mobs, in the presence of those who are wishing some pretext for wreaking their vengeance on them? The truth is, if good men were united no imprudences of a small portion of their number could raise a mob. It is only when they throw their influence against the protection of that small number, and by the exhibition of their own feelings, give intensity to those of the mob, that all the barriers of the law give way. What can be expected but ruin when one portion of good men are so deeply prejudiced against another as to feel that however great a calamity it is to have law give way, it is a deeper calamity to maintain it, if it involves the protection of their

rights? Yet this is the solution of many a mob. It is the solution of the mob at Alton.

And what but a wicked state of feeling can give rise to blindness so amazing? Did a sense of the presence of God, and holy communion with him ever give rise to such miserable and sophistical delusions? No. God is the God of law, of justice, and of order. And in his sight no crime is so heinous as to attempt or connive at the radical prostration of law and right. He who stands by the body of a murdered father, will never alleviate the guilt of the assassin who shed his blood, by a lisp of a few unguarded words which provoked the deed. But in the eye of God when the law is prostrated, a nation is slain: and he who aims an impious hand at the sacred rights of a fellow man, strikes a blow not merely at him, but at his country's heart. And were not the mind deadened by unholy alienation of feeling, and the vision dimmed by the films of sinful prejudice, the atrocity of the deed would leave no room for any feelings but those of indignation, nor for any words but those of rebuke.

I repeat it, therefore, that the prostration of law is owing wholly to divisions among good men. And if its power is finally and forever lost, and if a deluge of anarchy and blood shall desolate our land, it will be a part of the mournful record of the historic page, that, not the abandoned or profane, not the vile and polluted, but the wise and the good, deluded and deceived by Satan, threw open the flood-gates and let the dreadful deluge in.

And shall a consummation so terrific ingloriously

close our brief career? Shall we as a nation subserve no higher end than to stand forth as a beacon and a warning to the nations of the earth, as the smoke of our torment, and the voice of our wailings go up together?

If not, the voice of God must be heard. In tones of thunder He speaks from the silence of the grave! And if this event cannot rouse us to thought, nothing can. We are gone.

What then shall be done? Good men must unite, not on policy or on compromise, but on the truth. All prejudice, all passion must be laid aside; and under the sacred guidance of the spirit of God, we must dig down to the deep and immutable foundations of eternal truth. Nothing else accords with the age of the world in which we live, or with the revealed purposes of Almighty God.

The principles of individual rights, such as grow out of the nature of the human mind are as immutable and eternal as the throne of God; and to be united, all christians must adopt them. He who sees these principles knows their truth; and he cannot divide from God and the truth to unite with those who see them not. No. The only basis of lasting union is the truth; and if any refuse to admit the truth and to coincide with God, the guilt of the division must rest on them.

It is vain here to say, that this age of the world needs nothing but the preaching of the gospel. Most fully do I admit that nothing is needed but fully to unfold the principles of the gospel, and to apply them to every department of life. But the great

question of the age is: What do the principles of christianity say on this subject? Do they tolerate slavery; or cut it up root and branch? Indeed, until this question is decided no man can tell what the gospel is. If, indeed, the gospel authorizes, or does not condemn, and call for the immediate abandonment of a system, which fundamentally subverts every principle of right, the infidel wishes to know it; for he need ask no better reason to scorn its pretensions to be a message from God. But if it rebukes this with divine authority, as it does all other sins, and requires its immediate abandonment, then it is time for the church to know it, and fully to declare all the counsel of God.

I do not ask for unholy excitement or misguided zeal. I ask for that fear of God which shall suspend all other fear; and that holy courage and coolness and clearness of thought which nothing but his spirit can give. I ask for no needlessly irritating language, or unkind denunciations: but for that holy, kind and free inquiry, and candid comparison of views, which would take place if we were to stand together before the throne of God and under the influence of mutual love.

It is the horror of this age that on a subject so vast, there are those who will not inquire at all; and threaten with odium or death all who will. It is happy for the world that they cannot intimidate or silence the Almighty. Vain men! What do they hope for; at what do they aim? can they arrest the current of the universe? Can they contend with the eternal God?

It is time for those who desire not to be crushed by the movements of God, to arouse themselves to prayer and thought. The individual right of free inquiry and speech is his great instrument for renovating the world. Governments are designed mainly to defend individual rights, and the power of the magistrate is given him by God; and as God's minister it is his duty to act in maintaining law. And the horrid doctrine which gives to a mere numerical majority, the power against law to trample on individual right, is high handed rebellion against God.

It is high time that all delusion on this subject should cease : and that the right of free discussion should be seen in a higher and holier light than as a mere personal privilege. It is the demand of God that man shall be left free to hear his voice and obey his will : and he who attempts to stand between the soul of any man and his Maker, must expect to incur the wrath of God. God insists upon it that no individual, or community, or law shall obstruct the passage of his messages from man to man.

It is the deep feeling of this truth which is the source of all the true freedom which this world ever saw or enjoyed. All true freedom came through holy men and by such it must be preserved. In our land through the love of fame, or power, or money, the native energy of the principle is dying away, and a corrupt and tyrannical public sentiment is making us slaves. The people of God need a fresh baptism from on high. They need to kindle again the holy flame of freedom at the altar of God.

The exigency calls for no unholy spirit of defi-

ance, no resentment for injuries and wrongs, and no spirit of revenge over the grave of the dead. The spirit of Lovejoy was that of forgiving love, and let no other be kindled at his grave. Let no resentment embitter the nation : let all be kind and tender and gentle, and ready to forgive. But let the strength of holy purpose become daily more intense for God and for the right to know, to proclaim, and to do his will :—for this to live, and for this, if need be, to die.

I am sure that if good men would thus come near to God, they could not long remain divided from each other. Prejudices would be renounced, concessions and confessions be made; and that not merely on one side but by all. Nor would the question be who should concede most, for each would be willing to concede all that is wrong in himself, and to acknowledge all that is right in others. If thus united our liberties are sure, our nation is safe. We can ask nothing better than our own institutions if they can be maintained in their true spirit, and used for their true ends, in the fear of God.

And that we shall be able to do it I do not despair. There is intelligence and conscience, and religion enough to save our nation, if they can be brought into action with united power. And I confide in God that it will at last be done : that one warning so dreadful will be enough : and that by timely repentance we shall escape the impending judgments of God.











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